NATION

11 rivers in spate, heavy rains in several states

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BUSINESS

Sensex tumbles 287pts as markets end lower

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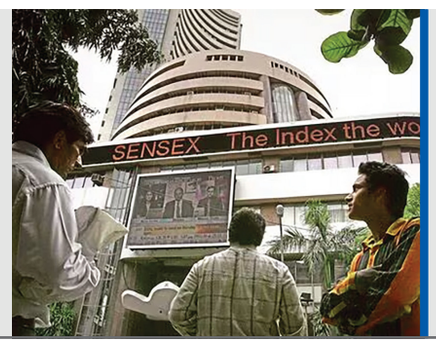

SPORTS

Yarraji suffers injury in big blow to World C'ships hopes

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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US to impose 500% tariff on India, China over Russia ties?

BENGALURU, 3 JULY

US President Donald Trump has allowed a Senate bill that could impose 500 per cent tariffs on countries like China and India that purchase Russian oil and energy products.

US senator Lindsey Graham said that Trump had said that the sanctions bill should be presented for a vote. Graham sponsored the new sanctions bill on Russia.

Terming the decision "a big breakthrough" which Graham said was part of efforts to bring Russian President Vladimir Putin to the negotiating table on Ukraine.

However, the US president had a waiver and could decide whether to sign it into law when it goes to Congress for approval. India purchased fossil fuels worth €4.2 billion from Russia in May, with crude oil amounting to 72 per cent of the total. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Russia has taken note of the US senator's statement. *—Agencies*

K'taka Cabinet clears projects worth Rs 3,400 cr

Cabinet renames B'luru University after Manmohan Singh

NANDI HILLS, 2 JULY

The Karnataka cabinet, in a meeting held atop the Nandi Hills here, on Wednesday ap-proved development projects worth Rs 3,400 crores, of which Rs 2,050 crores were earmarked for Bengaluru alone, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said.

The Cabinet renamed Bangalore City University as Dr Manmohan Singh Bengaluru City University, in honour of the former prime minister.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar announced the formation of a Cabinet Sub-Committee under Law Minister HK Patil to review the progress of the probe into illegal mining.

Referring to Yettinahole project, Siddaramaiah clarified it is a drinking water project, and filling the lakes is secondary. The Cabinet decided to first complete the project to provide drinking water to Kolar, Chikkaballapura, Bengaluru Rural, Tumakuru, and Hassan districts in two years.

A revised estimate of Rs 23,251 crore was made for the project, of which Rs 17,147 crores have been spent so far, Siddaramaiah said, while Rs 8,000 crore is required for completing the remaining work.

Construction of two hostels in Bengaluru at Rs 10 crore to provide training including ac-commodation for candidates from backward classes for IAS and IPS exam was approved.

The Cabinet also cleared the renaming of Bengaluru Rural district as Bengaluru North and resolved to seek a No Objection Certificate from the Union Home Ministry to rename Bagepalli taluk in Chikkaballapur as Bhagyanagara.

Shivakumar announced a Rs 237 crore project to supply treated water to 164 tanks in Shidlaghatta and Chintamani taluks using water from Hebbal-Nagavara Valley. A Rs 36 crore tank in Chintamani and administrative approval for a Rs 103 crore restoration of Kempegowda's fort in Magadi were also approved. *—Salar News with Agencies*

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah with Cabinet ministers during a visit at Bhoga Nandishwara Temple, before the commencement of the 14th Cabinet meeting, at Nandi Giridham in Chikkaballapur **PHOTO: PTI**

OTHER KEY DECISIONS ARE:

- Rs 1,125.25 for 31 new residential schools under the Karnataka Residential Educational Institutions Society.
- Rs 40 crore and Rs 20 crore to upgrade boys' and girls' colleges in Kolar; Rs 50 crore to develop Nandi Hills
- Rs 123 crore for the Bengaluru North campus in Shidlaghatta.
- Rs 46 crore for upgradation of 8 primary health centres in Kaiwara and Nandi

Quad calls for swift justice for Pahalgam perpetrators

WASHINGTON, 2 JULY

The Quad grouping has strongly condemned the 22 April Pahalgam terror attack and called for the per-petrators, organisers, and financiers to be brought to justice without delay. In a joint statement, the foreign ministers urged all UN member states to cooperate fully under international law and relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

Meeting in Washington to finalise the agenda for the Quad Summit in India later this year, the ministers – India's S Jaishankar, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Australia's Penny Wong, and Japan's Takeshi Iwaya – expressed condolences to the victims' families and wished the injured a swift recovery.

While not naming Pakistan or referencing the May conflict between Indian and Pakistani forces, the Quad reaffirmed its stance against cross-border terrorism.

The ministers also voiced concern over Beijing's aggressive moves in the East and South China Seas, citing "dangerous and provocative actions" including obstruction of navigation, unsafe military ma-noeuvres, and use of water cannons. They reiterated support for UNCLOS and called for the peaceful resolution of maritime disputes, highlighting the 2016 Hague tribunal ruling invalidating China's South China Sea claims.

Addressing economic security, the Quad warned against overdependence on one nation—implicitly China—for critical minerals, denouncing non-market practices that threaten global supply chains.

The group announced plans to launch the "Quad Ports of the Future" partnership in Mumbai this year. They also expressed alarm over Myanmar's worsening crisis, calling for adherence to cease-fire com-mitments and support for ASEAN's Five-Point Consensus to enable peaceful resolution and humanitari-an aid delivery. *—PTI*

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PM's trip to Ghana

PM Narendra Modi waves as he leaves for his 8-day trip.He will first visit Ghana ***PIC: PTI***

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Cheaper clothes, shoes soon? Govt mulls GST relief

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

The Central government is considering a major overhaul of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) structure to ease the burden on middle- and lower-income households. A key proposal involves scrapping the 12 per cent GST slab or moving commonly used items—such as toothpaste and tooth powder, umbrellas, sew-ing machines, pressure cookers and kitchen utensils, electric irons, geysers, small-capacity washing ma-chines, bicycles, ready-made garments priced over Rs 1,000, footwear priced between Rs 500 and Rs 1,000, stationery items, vaccines, ceramic tiles and agricultural tools-- into the lower 5 per cent bracket. The plan, likely to be discussed at the upcoming 56th GST Council meeting, could cost the exchequer $3.8–$4.8 billion annually but is expected to boost consumption. ***—PTI***

SpiceJet window frame detaches mid-air

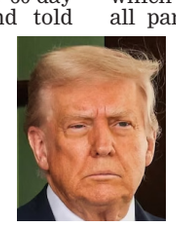
PUNE, 2 JULY

A SpiceJet flight from Goa to Pune experienced a mid-air incident when an interior window frame be-came dislodged. The airline stated the affected part was a non-structural, cosmetic trim used for shad-ing, with no impact on cabin pressurisation or passenger safety. The Q400 aircraft's outer, pressure-bearing window pane remained intact, ensuring structural integrity. SpiceJet confirmed the frame was refitted upon landing in Pune as per standard maintenance procedures. However, a concerned passen-ger shared a video of the dislodged window on social media, questioning the aircraft's airworthiness as it was set to operate a subsequent flight to Jaipur. The post tagged India's aviation regulator, DGCA, potentially prompting further scrutiny of the

Trump says Israel ready for 60-day Gaza ceasefire

WASHINGTON/CAIRO, 2 JULY

US President Donald Trump said on Tuesday that Israel agreed on terms for a 60-day ceasefire in Gaza and told Hamas to accept the deal or things would "only get worse".



Hamas said it was ready for a ceasefire, but stopped short of accepting the US proposal, insisting on its longstanding demand that any deal must bring an end to the war in Gaza.

Trump announced the development as he prepares to host Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for talks at the White House on Monday.

"My Representatives had a long and productive meeting with the Israelis on Gaza. Israel has agreed to the necessary conditions to finalize the 60 Day CEASEFIRE, during which time we will work with all par-ties to end the war," Trump wrote on his Truth Social, saying the Qataris and Egyptians would deliver the final proposal.

"I hope, for the good of the Middle East, that Hamas takes this Deal, because it will not get better -- IT WILL ONLY GET WORSE," he said.

Israeli Minister for Strategic Affairs, Ron Dermer, was in Washington on Tuesday for talks with senior administration officials. *—PTI*

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Stampede: K'taka moves HC against CAT reinstating cop

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

The Karnataka government has moved the High Court challenging the Central Administrative Tribunal's (CAT) order reinstating IPS officer Vikash Kumar Vikash, who was suspended following last month's Chinnaswamy Stadium stampede that left 11 dead and 56 injured.

On 1 July, the CAT's Bengaluru bench quashed the suspension, calling it "mechanical" and lacking suffi-cient grounds. The Tribunal, comprising BK Shrivastava and Santosh Mehra, ruled that the state failed to present convincing material to justify the action and ordered Vikash's immediate reinstatement.

In response, the state filed a writ petition, arguing the Tribunal overstepped its jurisdiction by passing judgment without the benefit of a full departmental inquiry. It labelled the ruling "perverse" and con-trary to established legal principles.

The government claimed it had submitted substantial evidence, including excerpts from the Karnataka Police Manual and a detailed timeline of events from 3–4 June, in a sealed cover. It argued this was not adequately considered.

The state further objected to the Tribunal's remarks on four other suspended officers — B Dayananda, Shekar H Tekkannavar, C Balakrishna, and AK Girish — who were not parties to the case and had not challenged their suspensions. The government termed the Tribunal's suggestion of their reinstatement "highly irregular".The High Court has yet to fix a date for hearing the petition. *—PTI*

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Get ready to pay a lot more for Ola, Uber rides

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

The Road Transport Ministry has updated its Motor Vehicles Aggregator Guidelines 2025, allowing cab aggregators like Uber, Ola, and Rapido to charge up to twice the base fare during peak hours, up from 1.5 times. Off-peak fares must be at least 50 per cent of the base fare. The base fare covers a minimum of three kilometres to offset "dead mileage." Drivers and passengers cancelling without valid reasons face a 10 per cent penalty, capped at Rs 100. Aggregators must ensure insurance, route tracking, griev-ance redressal, and gradual EV fleet inclusion. States have three months to adopt the revised norms . *—PTI*

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Centre denies heart attack and Covid vaccine links

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

The Union Health Ministry on Wednesday said extensive studies have conclusively established no linkag-es between coronavirus vaccines and sudden deaths, responding to State Chief Minister Siddaramaiah connecting the surge in heart-related deaths in Hassan district to the Covid vaccine.

Siddaramaiah had on Tuesday said "hasty approval and distribution" of the Covid vaccine could be a rea-son for the more than 20 deaths in Hassan. He urged everyone to visit the nearest health centre imme-diately for a check-up if they have symptoms such as chest pain or difficulty breathing, and not to ignore these signs.

Among the 22 reported cases in Hassan, nine were under 30 years old, including a 19-year-old student and a 25-year-old government employee. Most died unexpectedly at home or in public places without prior symptoms, raising fears and anxiety among residents. *—PTI*

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GADEN PHODRANG TRUST TO DECIDE

Dalai Lama says reincarnation will be after death; China irked

BEIJING, 2 JULY

The Dalai Lama on Wednesday confirmed that the 600-year-old institution will continue after his death, stating only the Gaden Phodrang Trust, established by his office in 2015, will have the authority to rec-og-nise his successor and future reincarnation. The announcement, ahead of his 90th birthday, is expected to escalate tensions with China.

Beijing swiftly rejected the plan, insisting that any future Dalai Lama must be recognised through the state-controlled "Golden Urn" process and approved by the Chinese government, in accordance with its laws and regulations.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning criticised the announcement, asserting that the Dalai Lama's reincarnation must align with domestic protocols and legal frameworks. Notably, her comments were omitted from the official transcript of the press briefing.

China also defended its policy of "sinicisation" of Tibetan Buddhism. Mao described it as aligning reli-gions with China's socio-cultural context under President Xi Jinping's directives. China's Ambassador to India, Xu Feihong, echoed Beijing's stance, emphasising historical and legal pro-cedures for recognising reincarnations.

The Dalai Lama fled to India in 1959 after China's takeover of Tibet, and since then has been at odds with the Communist regime. His successor's recognition could trigger tensions with the US.*—PTI*

Khandelwal to helm BJP in MP, Samik to lead in WB

BHOPAL, 2 JULY

Hemant Kumar Khandelwal has been elected unopposed as the new president of the Madhya Pradesh BJP. The announcement was made on Wednesday in Bhopal by Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, with senior leaders including outgoing chief Vishnu Dutt Sharma and Shivraj Singh Chouhan in attend-ance. Senior BJP leader and Rajya Sabha MP Samik Bhattacharya is set to become the new president of the West Bengal BJP as no other candidate filed nomination for the post till the deadline on Wednes-day, party leaders said.

Khandelwal, MLA from Betul, filed his nomination on Tuesday, proposed by Chief Minister Mohan Yadav. A former MP, he served as Betul district BJP president (2010–2013) and was re-elected as MLA in 2023.

PHOTO: ANI

He is also president of the Kushabhau Thakre Trust, linked to the BJP, and son of late MP Vijay Kumar Khandelwal. Meanwhile, West Bengal BJP is set to appoint a new president by 3 July. *—PTI*

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Diddy acquitted of sex trafficking, guilty of prostitution

NEW YORK, 2 JULY

Hip-hop mogul Sean "Diddy" Combs was acquitted on Wednesday of sex trafficking and racketeering charges but convicted of a prostitution-related offence, in a mixed verdict that could still see him jailed for up to 10 years.

The case features salacious allegations that he coerced women into sexual encounters with other men called sometimes referred to as "Freak Offs." *—PTI*

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Centre denies Covid vaccine link to heart issues

Siddaramaiah had blamed the jab for surge in heart-related deaths in Hassan district

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

The Union Health Ministry on Wednesday said extensive studies have conclusively established no linkages between coronavirus vaccines and sudden deaths, responding to State Chief Minister Siddaramaiah connecting the surge in heart-related deaths in Hassan district to the Covid vaccine.

Siddaramaiah had on Tuesday said "hasty approval and distribution" of the Covid vaccine could be a reason for the more than 20 deaths in Hassan. He urged everyone to visit the nearest health centre immediately for a check-up if they have symptoms such as chest pain or difficulty breathing, and not to ignore these signs.

The ministry said that sudden unexplained deaths has been investigated through several agencies in the country and these studies have conclusively established that there is no direct link between Covid-19 vaccination and reports of sudden deaths.

Studies by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) affirm that Covid-19 vaccines in India are safe and effective, with extremely rare instances of serious side effects, the ministry said in a statement.

"Scientific experts have reiterated that statements linking Covid vaccination to sudden deaths are false and misleading, and are not supported by scientific consensus," the statement said.

The two studies found that Covid-19 vaccination does not appear to increase the risk, whereas, the role of underlying health issues, genetic predisposition and risky lifestyle choices does play a role in unexplained sudden deaths, the statement said.

Sudden cardiac deaths can result from a wide range of factors, including genetics, lifestyle, pre-existing conditions, and post-Covid complications, it added.

Importantly, no major changes in the pattern of causes have been observed when compared with previous years. In majority of the unexplained death cases, genetic mutations have been identified as a possible cause of these deaths. *—PTI*

KIA wins 10 accolades for food and beverages

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

Kempegowda International Airport on Wednesday announced that it had won 10 accolades at the 2025 Airport Food and Beverage (FAB) Hospitality Conference and Awards, held recently in Barcelona, Spain. With an impressive tally of 10 awards, BLR Airport's lounges and restaurants have once again raised the bar for airport hospitality, not just in India but globally, an official statement said. At the heart of this success were the 080 Lounges, which emerged as standout winners across seven categories, reflecting their commitment to curated luxury, regional authenticity, and innovative service, it added. "These wins reflect the dedication, creativity, and passion our teams and partners bring to the table every day," said Kenneth Guldbjerg, Chief Commercial Officer at Bangalore International Airport Ltd (BIAL). *—PTI*

BJP mocks Priyank for threatening to ban RSS

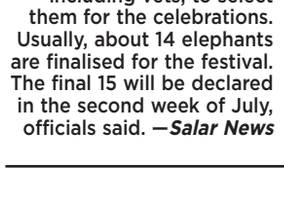
BENGALURU, 2 JULY

Following minister Priyank Kharge's statement on imposing a ban on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the BJP hit back at the Congress leader, saying that he is "threatening bans" as he feels that the situation in the country is like it was in the year 1975. The BJP also criticised Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge in an X post, saying that Kalaburagi, which has been "ruled" by Kharge for more than 50 years, remains one of the most underdeveloped parts of State. "Priyank Kharge, a minister only because of his father's influence, is now threatening bans like it's 1975 all over again," the post said. "And if he thinks making such statements will distract Kannadigas from the Multi Crore Housing Committee scam, he has failed. Just like he did in first PUC". *—ANI*

WHO to mark Asha Kirana as global eye care model

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has expressed interest in Karnataka's 'Asha Kirana' initiative that provides doorstep eye care and plans to share its success story with other countries and regions. The WHO has proposed a comprehensive assessment of the initiative to further strengthen the programme. In a letter to Harsh Gupta, Principal Secretary of Health and Family Welfare, WHO Representative to India Dr Roderico H Ofrin appreciated the state government for conceptualising and effectively implementing the initiative. *—PTI*



Forest department intensifies search for Dasara jumbos

MYSURU, 2 JULY

Forest department officials intensified a drive for selection of jumbos that will take part in the historic jamboo savari Vijayadashami procession by visiting various elephant camps. The move comes a week after Dasara high power committee decided to celebrate the festival on a grand scale and cleared the proposal to allow jumbos in Mysuru on 4 August. State government has over 100 tamed elephants in different elephant camps. Of them, 25-30 will be listed as eligible elephants based on their behaviour and temperament, which will be examined by a team of foresters, including vets, to select them for the celebrations. Usually, about 14 elephants are finalised for the festival. The final 15 will be declared in the second week of July, officials said. *—Salar News*

HIGH COMMAND'S CALL

What option do I have? DKS on Siddaramaiah sticking to chair

BENGALURU/ CHIKKABALLAPURA, 2 JULY

With Siddaramaiah asserting that he will be the Chief Minister of Karnataka for a full five-year term, Deputy CM DK Shivakumar, who has made no secret his aspiration for the post said, "What option I have? I have to stand by him, support him."

He said he will fulfil the directions of the Congress high command. "I don't have any objection to it," Shivakumar told press in response to a question about SIddaramaiah's statement. "Whatever the party high command tells and whatever it desires, it will be fulfilled."

Asked whether the party is not backing him and that his supporters are rooting for him to become CM, he said, "I don't want to discuss anything. Lakhs of workers have supported this party. It is not only DK Shivakumar." Speaking to reporters in Chikkaballapura earlier in the day, Siddaramaiah asserted that he will be in office for a full five-year term. Meanwhile, Congress General Secretary in-charge of Karnataka Randeep Singh Surjewala continued his one-on-one meetings with party MLAs for the third consecutive day.

BJP's Vijayendra said Surjewala came to "prepare grounds" for Siddaramaiah's resignation. Similarly, Leader of Opposition R Ashoka said "CM change is definite in October or November".

Siddaramaiah, retorted, "Are they our high command?" he asked. "They only lie. We are all together (in Congress). As I have said in Mysuru, we will be in power for five years. Our government will be as solid as a rock," he said.

—Salar News with Agencies

Chief Minister Siddarmaiah with Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and Home Minister G Parameshwar at Nandi Hills on Wednesday
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Media twisting words to tarnish my image: BR Patil

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

Congress MLA BR Patil on Wednesday issued a clarification over his "luck lottery" remarks about Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and stated that the latter was elevated to the top post based on his "mass leadership".

In a self-recorded video message, Patil said, "Electronic media and social media are twisting my statements and trying to tarnish my image. When I was speaking to one of my close friends in Krishnaraja Pete, Siddaramaiah's name came up, and I said he was lucky that he became the Chief Minister. I did not say that I introduced him to Sonia Gandhi. I was with him when we met Sonia Gandhi. He is a mass leader, and I'm not powerful enough to make him the Chief Minister…. Some are trying to break our close relationship intentionally. Nine of our MLAs in the leadership of Siddaramaiah joined the Congress from JD(S), Congress also made him the Chief Minister by looking at his mass leadership." *—ANI*

BCCI instructs RCB, KSCA to file written submissions over stampede

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

IPL champions Royal Challengers Bengaluru have landed in further trouble after BCCI Ombudsman-cum-Ethics Officer Justice (Retd) Arun Mishra directed the franchise, along with the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA), to file written submissions over gross negligence during the team's victory celebrations in City, which led to the death of 11 people.

The Ombudsman has granted RCB and KSCA four weeks to respond, following an official complaint filed by IPS officer Vikas Kumar.

The complainant has also urged the Ombudsman to bar the current owners from selling the franchise until the investigation into the tragedy is complete.

"Looking at the gravity of the incident, it is considered appropriate that the KSCA, as well as RCB be asked to submit their written replied to the complaint," Justice Mishra wrote in his directive. "(The) complaint alleges gross negligence and violation of safety norms by the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) franchise. Complainant submits that accountability must be fixed." One of the possible reasons for seeking a written explanation from the RCB could be the growing speculation within IPL circles that the franchise is considering a sale, with the current owners allegedly attempting to distance themselves from the recent tragedy. *—PTI*

HCG denies allegations of unfair clinical trials

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

Bengaluru-headquartered Health Care Global Enterprises Limited (HCG) on Wednesday denied allegations of unfair clinical trials at its facility, claiming that it is successfully conducting a significant number of studies with utmost transparency and prioritising patient safety approved by its ethics committee.

The development came after Justice P Krishna Bhat (Retd), former chairperson of the Institutional Ethics Committee of HCG, levelled allegations of unfair clinical trials being conducted by the firm, in response to which the State government wrote to the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI), seekingan investigation into the allegtions.

The HCG said it strictly adhered to all guidelines set by regulatory authorities, including the DCGI and the Indian Council of Medical Research.

"We've noticed some unverified information about HCG, a

pioneer in Cancer care in India and Africa. We assure you that we strictly adhere to all guidelines set by regulatory authorities, including DCGI and ICMR.

"We're successfully conducting a significant number of trials with the utmost transparency, prioritising patient safety, approved by our Ethics Committee. Our commitment to delivering exceptional care remains unwavering," said HCG Founder and Chairman Dr BS Ajaikumar in a statement. According to its official website, the HCG is a healthcare provider offering cancer care, tertiary care, infertility treatment and advanced screening and diagnostic services. *—Salar News*

OPERATORS URGE K'TAKA HC TO LIFT BAN ON BIKE TAXIS

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

Bike taxis are not only affordable and convenient but also among the safest travel options for women commuters, asserted Senior Advocate Jayna Kothari at Karnataka High Court on Wednesday. The court was hearing pleas challenging a previous ruling blocking bike taxis.

"We want this service to continue. Women should be heard before decisions like this are made," she said. Kothari also cited measures such as background checks and pre-qualification tests for riders, nighttime restrictions and increasing women bike taxi drivers to make the service safe and inclusive.

Representing Uber, advocate Uday Holla was also in favour of lifting the ban, pointing out that bike taxis are now permitted in states where it was earlier restricted. He also cited a recent statistic that traffic congestion in Bengaluru surged by 18 per cent since the ban. *—PTI*

Infy staffer held for filming woman at office washroom

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

A 30-year-old Infosys employee was arrested on Wednesday for allegedly secretly filming a female colleague inside the washroom at the company's Electronic City campus, police said. The accused, identified as Swapnil Nagesh Mali is from Maharashtra who was caught red-handed and handed over to cops by colleagues.

The incident occurred on Monday morning around 11am when the woman noticed a suspicious reflection and movement from an adjacent cubicle while using the washroom. Moments later, the accused was allegedly standing on a commode in the next cubicle and filming her with his mobile phone, the woman wrote in a complaint submitted to cops.

As the woman techie ran out to alert her colleagues, the man who was trying to flee the scene was caught by the HR.

On checking his phone, HR personnel found a video of not just her but yet another woman employed at Infosys.

The woman later filed a complaint with the Electronic City police, after which a case was registered against the man.

The accused has been nabbed and an investigation is underway but the incident has raised serious concerns about workplace safety and privacy.

Infosys said, "We…. have taken necessary action against the employee, who is no longer with the company. We also promptly supported the complainant by facilitating a swift complaint with law enforcement authorities and continue to cooperate with the ongoing investigation".

—Salar News with Agencies

Cong slams Centre over Pak's UNSC role

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

The Congress on Wednesday slammed the PM Modi-led government for allegedly failing to prevent Pakistan from assuming key positions in the United Nations, calling it a major diplomatic setback for India.

Pakistan on Tuesday said that it assumed the Presidency of the UN Security Council for the month of July. The presidency of the Security Council is part of Pakistan's two-year term as a non-permanent member of the UNSC. In addition, Pakistan will chair the Taliban Sanctions Committee and serve as vice-chair of the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee. Speaking to reporters in City, Congress General Secretary Randeep Singh Surjewala said, "the terror state of Pakistan has now been made the global security broker. The devil is now in the chair."

Pakistan, "a terror state with a proven record of harbouring terrorists, promoting terrorism, and exporting terror to India" was being elevated to global leadership positions, even as India continues to face terror attacks sponsored by it, he said. "This happened just weeks after the Pahalgam terror attack, which was Pakistan-sponsored," Surjewala alleged, questioning the Modi government's "silence and inaction".

He said Pakistan's elevation came "despite all the bravado on foreign policy" displayed by the PM and the foreign minister. *—PTI*

Karnataka Congress in-charge Randeep Singh Surjewala with AICC Secretary Abhishek Dutt during a press meet at party office in Bengaluru on Wednesday
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

LENS ON FARMERS' ROLE

18 monkeys poisoned to death in Bandipur

MYSURU, 2 JULY

Close on the heels of killing of a tigress and her four cubs to death in MM Hills wildlife sanctuary, 18 monkeys were poisoned to death in Gundlupet taluk of Chamarajanagar district on Wednesday.

The forest department officials recovered the carcasses of 18 bonnet macaques which were found dead on Kodasoge- Kandegala road in Bandipur Tiger Reserve buffer zone in Gundlupet rural police station limits.

They also rescued two monkeys battling for life and arranged the necessary treatment for them at a veterinary hospital in Gundlupet town.

Assistant Director of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Sciences Dr Mahadesh said that the post-mortem report confirmed that the monkeys were poisoned to death. He added that the samples were sent to advanced laboratories ensure accurate testing.

According to preliminary investigation reports, forest department officials suspected that local farmers may have been upset over destruction of their crops, leading them to poison the macaques. They later they dumped them on the roadside of Kodasoge and Kandegala stretch, police believed. Police said that they probing all possible angles.

Camera footage installed along the stretch did not reveal any suspicious movement of goods vehicles or autoricksaws, but police recovered to gunny bags near the monkey's bodies.

The incident has drawn widespread condemnation both by villagers and environmentalists.

Mysuru Wildlife Circle Chief Conservator of Forests Malathipriya said that the department will take action after going through postmortem reports. *—Salar News*

SI shunted for not arresting Belagavi Ram Sena activist

BELAGAVI, 2 JULY

A sub-inspector of the Hukkeri police station in Belagavi district was suspended for not arresting a rowdy sheeter, who was also a Sri Ram Sena activist. Mahaveer Solhapur was banished from the district to Kalaburagi for his alleged antisocial activities. He was one among the five Sena activists, who were tied to a coconut tree and beaten by villagers of Ingale for forcibly taking a van carrying cows to the police station.

Belagavi SP Bhimashankar Guled suspended Sub Inspector Nikhil Kamble for neither arresting Solhapur nor informing his seniors about the attack on the Sena activists.

After the activists brought the van to the police station, Inspector Kamble had sent the cows to a cattle shed and allowed them to cite farming as the purpose for the cattle purchase.

Ram Sena later tried to hold a protest march to Ingale village to condemn the attack on its members. However, the police did not allow the protest. However, villagers said they would not allow others to intervene in matters concerning their village.*—Salar News*

Indus Treaty: Done with threats, Pak plans new water facility

PAKISTAN, 2 JULY

- India cited Pakistan's alleged support for cross-border terrorism as the reason, declaring the treaty would remain "in abeyance" until Islamabad ends such activities — a term with no standing in international law.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has announced plans to enhance the country's water storage capacity after India refused to reinstate the Indus Waters Treaty, which New Delhi suspended in April following the Pahalgam terror attack.

India cited Pakistan's alleged support for cross-border terrorism as the reason, declaring the treaty would remain "in abeyance" until Islamabad ends such activities — a term with no standing in international law.

Sharif accused India of "weaponising water" and said the decision to boost water storage was necessary for national security. "The enemy has evil designs against Pakistan," he said, vowing to develop "non-controversial" water infrastructure, including the long-delayed Diamer-Bhasha Dam. Diamer-Bhasha Dam, a concrete-filled gravity dam under construction on the Indus River between Kohistan and Diamer, has been a point of contention. India objects to its location in territory it considers illegally occupied. The dam also faces opposition from locals, who demand their concerns be addressed before construction proceeds.

Sharif referred to the 1991 Water Accord between Pakistan's provinces to justify the move, stating, "We will build this capacity with our own resources in the next few years," and highlighted the National Disaster Management Authority's role in the effort.

Pakistan had repeatedly petitioned India to reverse the suspension, but Indian officials rejected these appeals.

Islamabad recently took matter to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, which noted that neither party can unilaterally suspend the treaty. India, however, dismissed the court's statement as a "charade at Pakistan's behest." —*Agencie*

Pakistan had repeatedly petitioned India to reverse the suspension, but Indian officials rejected these appeals **PHOTO: ANI**

Ferozepur man injured in Pak aerial strike dies

FEROZEPUR, 2 JULY

A 57-year-old man, who injured when missile debris fell on his home during a Pakistani aerial strike in May, died at a Ludhiana hospital on Tuesday night, officials said on Wednesday. Lakhwinder Singh, a resident of Khai Pheme Ke village in Punjab's Ferozepur, breathed his last, 54 days after the 9 May Pakistani shelling. He had been on ventilator for the past few days, they said. His wife Sukhwinder Kaur, 50, died on 13 May. Their son Jaswinder Singh, who also received burn injuries when debris set their house and a car on fire, was inconsolable. The family was initially admitted to a hospital in Ferozepur and later shifted to a private hospital in Ludhiana. Jaswinder was discharged after treatment. —*PTI*

Sikkim a neighbour: Cong leader criticised

GANGTOK, 2 JULY

Congress leader Ajoy Kumar's reference to Sikkim as a "neighbouring country" has drawn widespread criticism from various sections of the society, including political parties, in the Himalayan state. Kumar, during a press conference on Tuesday, had referred to the state as a neighbouring country in the same frame alongside Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. However, with the issue snowballing into a controversy, the senior Congress leader on Tuesday apologised, stating it was a "slip of the tongue". "Yesterday, when I was speaking on the deteriorating relations with our neighbouring countries, I accidentally took the name of a state, for which I sincerely apologise as it was just a slip of the tongue. BJP looks for small mistakes of the opposition leaders," he added. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

SAD chief Badal, party leaders detained in Mohali

CHANDIGARH, 2 JULY

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) chief Sukhbir Singh Badal and other Akali leaders were on Wednesday detained in Mohali, where they had come to express solidarity with party leader Bikram Singh Majithia. Arrested in a disproportionate assets case, Majithia was produced before a court in Mohali after his seven-day vigilance remand ended on Wednesday. Heavy police deployment was made outside Vigilance Bureau office and the district court in Mohali. Badal, along with party leaders Sikander Singh Maluka and Parambans Singh Bunty Romana, was detained near the Amb Sahib gurdwara. When Badal and other leaders tried to walk towards the gurdwara, police stopped them. Later, police detained Badal and other SAD leaders and took them to a police station. —*PTI*

SC to hear plea over Shiv Sena symbol on 14 July

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

The Uddhav Thackeray-led faction on Wednesday moved the Supreme Court for an urgent hearing on its plea over the contentious Shiv Sena symbol in the wake of the upcoming local body elections in Maharashtra. The matter was mentioned before a bench of Justices MM Sundresh and K Vinod Chandran which agreed to list it on 14 July. The counsel for the Shiv Sena (UBT) informed the bench that local body polls were likely to be notified soon in the state. The counsel appearing for the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena faction said a similar request was made on 7 May before a bench headed by Justice Surya Kant, also hearing the symbol row matter, and it was rejected. —*PTI*

Quad to expand security, rare minerals cooperation

US Secretary Rubio says the Quad must be a 'vehicle for action'

WASHINGTON, 2 JULY

The United States, Australia, India and Japan have agreed to expand their cooperation on maritime security in the Indo-Pacific and further collaborate on supplies of critical minerals and rare earths that are key components of high-tech production.

The foreign ministers of the four countries, known as the "Quad", met in Washington on Tuesday as the Trump administration seeks to expand US influence in the Indo-Pacific to compete with a rising China amid tensions with partners over trade and defense issues.

In a joint meeting with his three colleagues, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the Quad must be a "vehicle for action" that goes beyond statements of intent and stressed that commerce and trade will be critical to ensuring the group's relevance in the future.

To that end, the four announced in a statement the creation of a "Quad Critical Minerals Initiative" that aims "to strengthen economic security and collective resilience by collaborating on securing and diversifying critical mineral supply chains".

The statement did not provide details of the initiative.

"We are deeply concerned about the abrupt constriction and future reliability of key supply chains, specifically for critical minerals," they said.

The statement did not mention China by name, but Chinese domination of the critical minerals supply chain has long been a concern of the US and others.

The ministers expressed specific concern about rising tensions in the East and South China Seas, where Beijing has become increasingly assertive of maritime and territorial claims that are rejected by its smaller neighbours.

The ministers also condemned North Korea for continuing to launch ballistic missiles, expand its nuclear weapons program and engage in malicious cyberactivity.

In a veiled reference to North Korean support for Russia in its war against Ukraine, they expressed "deep concern about countries that are deepening military cooperation with North Korea, which directly undermines the global nonproliferation regime." —*PTI*

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar flanked by from left, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong, Japanese Foreign Minister Iwaya Takeshi and Secretary of State Marco Rubio at the Quad meeting **PHOTO: PTI**

US, India 'aware' of security concerns in the Indo-Pacific region: EAM

Washington, 3 July

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar met US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth at the Pentagon on Tuesday about advancing defence partnership between both countries. After the meeting, Hegseth expressed hope that the US can complete several major pending defence sales to India and that both countries are "mutually aware" of the security concerns in the Indo-Pacific region. The EAM also met the US Energy Secretary Chris Wright and discussed opportunities for a deeper bilateral energy partnership. He is in the US on an official visit from 30 June to 2 July at the invitation of US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. Jaishankar also met with him in the sidelines of the Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting and shared perspectives on developments. —*PTI*

India committed to BRICS: Modi embarks on 5-nation tour

Delhi, 3 July

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said India is committed to BRICS as a vital platform for cooperation among emerging economies as he left on a week-long visit to five countries, including Brazil where he will attend the bloc's meeting. "Together, we strive for a more peaceful, equitable, just, democratic and balanced multipolar world order," he added. During the week-long travel, he will first visit Ghana and then Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina, Brazil and Namibia. While in Argentina, he is set to visit Buenos Aires, the first bilateral visit by an Indian PM in 57 years. Then, he will attend BRICS Summit in Rio. —*PTI*

Yellow smoke bombs were thrown in Parliament in 2023 **PHOTO: PTI**

Parl security breach: two accused get bail

DELHI, 3 JULY

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday granted bail to two accused in the December 2023 Parliament security breach case.

A bench of Justices Subramonium Prasad and Harish Vaidyanathan Shankar granted relief to Neelam Azad and Mahesh Kumawat on a personal bond of Rs 50,000 each and two sureties. Granting bail to the accused, the two-judge bench directed them not to give interviews to media outlets or make social media posts related to the Parliament security breach case.

As part of the bail condition, the duo were also restricted from leaving Delhi and directed to report to designated police station every Monday, Wednesday & Friday at 10 am.

The ruling was in response to a plea by the accused challenging, challenging an earlier trial court order that rejected their bail plea.

On 13 December 2023, on the 22nd anniversary of the 2001 Parliament terror attack, the duo - Sagar Sharma and Manoranjan D - allegedly jumped into the Lok Sabha chamber from the public gallery during Zero Hour. Once there, they released yellow gas from canisters and sloganeered before they were overpowered by a few Member of Parliament.

Meanwhile, two more men - Amol Shinde and Azad - sprayed gas from canisters while shouting "tanashahi nahi chalegi (dictatorship won't work)" outside Parliament premises. —*PTI*

Congress will discuss alliance with Uddhav, Sharad Pawar: Chavan

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

The Congress will discuss alliance matters only with Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Uddhav Thackeray and NCP (SP)'s Sharad Pawar, and leave the decision on a "sub-alliance" to them, former Maharashtra chief minister Prithviraj Chavan has said amid speculation that the Thackeray cousins and the NCP factions may join hands.

Chavan, however, made it clear that if the NCP merger happens and if that party goes with the NDA, it would become difficult for the Congress to continue the alliance with them in Maharashtra.

In an interview with PTI, he dubbed the talk of coming together of the Shiv Sena (UBT) and Raj Thackeray-led Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) as a "family matter".

Asked specifically about Raj Thackeray, Chavan told PTI, "Our experience is that he is a senior leader in Maharashtra politics. He is a big crowd puller; whenever he has a public meeting, there are huge crowds. But that doesn't get translated into votes, and that is why he has no presence in the current Maharashtra assembly."

There is a view that former Shiv Sena votes will combine together and they may get some benefit, he said on the positives of the Thackeray cousins coming together. —*PTI*

Custodial death: Brother gets govt job

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

Tamil Nadu government has provided a government job to the brother of the victim, who died while in custody in Sivaganga district.

State Minister for Co-operation, KR Periyakaruppan & Sivaganga district collector K Porkodi, handed over the job appointment order and land patta measuring three cents at Theli village to B Naveen Kumar, the brother of Sivaganga custodial death victim B Ajith Kumar at his house in Madappuram on Wednesday.

Naveen was offered the post of technician at the Sivaganga district co-operative milk producers' union. —*Agencies*

BJP to pass motion against Lalu for Ambedkar's insult

PATNA, 2 JULY

The former Bihar chief minister has been drawing flak over a video clip in which a portrait of BR Ambedkar was seen close to his feet when people were visiting his residence to greet him on his 78th birthday.

The Bihar BJP has announced it will pass a censure motion against RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav for allegedly disrespecting Dr BR Ambedkar, after a video surfaced showing Ambedkar's portrait seemingly placed near Lalu's feet during his 78th birthday.

Ahead of state elections, the BJP's state executive meeting, attended by over 1,200 leaders and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, pledged a "Vijay Sankalp" (victory resolution) and took aim at the opposition. Bihar BJP president Dilip Jaiswal said the motion condemning Lalu would be passed to highlight the "insult" to the icon.

Singh called the act "no minor mistake" but a sign of a "feudal mindset disguised as socialism". He further accused Lalu of hypocrisy. —*PTI*

BJP announces new presidents in seven states & two UTs

BHOPAL/KOLKATA/NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

The BJP on Wednesday made Betul MLA Hemant Kumar Khandelwal and Rajya Sabha MP Samik Bhattacharya its new state presidents for its units in Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal respectively, signaling an organisational revamp ahead of key elections.

In Madhya Pradesh, Khandelwal was elected unopposed as the new state BJP chief. His appointment was declared by Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in the presence of senior leaders including Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Virendra Kumar, and outgoing president Vishnu Dutt Sharma.

Similarly, senior leader Bhattacharya is set to become the new president of the West Bengal BJP as no other candidate filed for a nomination, party leaders said.

He succeeds VD Sharma, who had been heading the state BJP unit since 2020.

The BJP also appointed Ravindra Chavan for Maharashtra, N. Ramchander Rao for Telengana, PVN Madhav for Andhra Pradesh, Mahendra Bhatt, for Uttarakhand, Rajeev Bindal for Himachal Pradesh, VP Ramalingam for Puduchery, Beichhua for Mizoram and Anil Tiwari for Andaman and Nicobar.

The BJP is laying a foundation for its central leadership transition and gearing up organisationally for the upcoming state and national elections. —*PTI*

Here are the newly appointed BJP state presidents:

Madhya Pradesh	**Hemant Khandelwal**
Maharashtra	**Ravindra Chavan**
Telangana	**N Ramchander Rao**
Andhra Pradesh	**PVN Madhav**
Uttarakhand	**Mahendra Bhatt**
Himachal Pradesh	**Rajeev Bindal**
Puducherry	**VP Ramalingam**
Mizoram	**Beichhua**
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	**Anil Tiwari**

WHEN LANGUAGES DIVIDE

MNS workers assault shopkeeper for not speaking Marathi

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

A video showing members of the Raj Thackeray party ganging up on a shopkeeper in Thane, on Saturday went viral on the day the Maharashtra government decided to withdraw the three-language implementation order in the state.

A case was filed at the Kashimira police station against the party's seven members for the assault after the video went viral on Tuesday. The incident occurred when the shopkeeper questioned the workers on why speaking Marathi is mandatory.

A member of the MNS told the shopkeeper, "You asked me why you should speak in Marathi. What does that mean? When you had trouble, you came to the MNS office." To this, the shopkeeper replied that he did not know that speaking in Marathi was obligatory.

Meanwhile, another member allegedly threatened the man with curse words, stating that he would not be permitted to do business in the area. The shopkeeper, replying to the threat, said that he would have to be taught Marathi, to which they replied that he should just say that and asked what he meant as to why one should learn Marathi, adding "This is Maharashtra. Which language is spoken in Maharashtra?"

The tension escalated when the shopkeeper's response, stating all languages are spoken in Maharashtra, resulted in one of the men slapping the shopkeeper while other joined in.

The shopkeeper, who was trying to explain his answer, was not heard and was continuously assaulted. —*Agencies*

Shopkeeper assaulted by MNS memebers in Thane, in Maharashtra **PHOTO: X**

PHOTO: X

Poaching: Bones of 3 tigers found in Ranthambore

JAIPUR, 2 JULY

Concerns over poaching in Rajasthan's Ranthambore Tiger Reserve have intensified after it was found that three tigers killed by an interstate gang of poachers were likely from there. A joint operation in May led to the arrest of six poachers, including three from Rajasthan. Over 225 pieces of big cat bones were seized near Sheopur in Madhya Pradesh. DNA testing confirmed that the seized remains were of three tigers and one leopard. The samples were sent to the National Centre for Biological Sciences in Bengaluru, for advanced matching with Ranthambore's tiger database. The poaching occurred on Rajasthan's side of the Chambal. *—PTI*

J&K springs sealed to check stomach ailments

RAJOURI, 2 JULY

Two women have died and around 40 others have fallen ill due to a gastroenteritis and diarrhoea outbreak in Rajouri district, Jammu and Kashmir. The illness was traced to contaminated natural springs in Dhar Sakri and Tralla villages. Officials confirmed that two of five tested springs contained E. coli bacteria. A 75-year-old woman from Sakri and a 40-year-old woman from Tralla died from complications, including dehydration and organ failure. Authorities have sealed all five springs as a precaution and issued a public advisory urging residents to use only treated water. The contaminated springs have been chlorinated, and safe water supply is being ensured. Tap water in the affected area was declared safe for consumption.*—PTI*

Seniors attack Bhopal medico, video viral

BHOPAL, 2 JULY

A case has been registered in Bhopal after a video showing students assaulting a junior at a private medical college went viral on social media. The incident occurred on Monday evening at People's Medical College, police said on Wednesday. According to Nishatpura Police Station in-charge Rupesh Dubey, the third-year complainant was allegedly beaten by Paras Jain and two others, who accused him of sending inappropriate messages to Jain's family. An FIR has been filed under relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. However, the accused have also lodged a counter-complaint of assault against the complainant. No arrests have been made yet, and police said the matter remains under investigation.*—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Boy pushes teen to death, calls it suicide

MUMBAI, 2 JULY

A teenage boy has been charged with murder after allegedly pushing a 15-year-old girl to her death from a building terrace in Bhandup (West), Mumbai. The girl, a student at an international school, had met the 16-year-old boy on 24 June to discuss academic stress. The pair argued about dating atop a water tank on the building's terrace, where the boy allegedly pushed her off. He threw her phone to mislead investigators, claiming she had died by suicide. CCTV footage contradicted his statement and he later confessed to the crime. He was booked and sent to a juvenile detention centre in Dongri. *—PTI*

11 rivers in spate, heavy rains in several states

Himachal cloudbursts kill 10, 3 dies in Odisha landslide

SHIMLA/ KEONJHAR/ JAIPUR/ NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Predestrians amid rainfall in shimla *PHOTO: PTI*

The death toll from cloudbursts and flash flood-related incidents in the Himachal's Mandi district has risen to 10 with the recovery of five additional bodies. The search for 34 missing people is underway.

The state witnessed 11 cloudburst incidents, four flash floods and a major landslide on 1 July, mostly in Mandi district.

Two bodies were recovered in Siyanj in Gohar, and one each in Thunag, Dhar Jarol, and Pandeev Sheel areas.

There was significant damage to important infrastructure in the state.

An orange alert was sounded for isolated areas across the state from 4 July to 6.

Odisha

Three persons were killed in a landslide triggered by heavy rain while extracting manganese illegally from a mine near Bichakundi Dalpahar in Odisha's Keonjhar district.

Rajasthan

Monsoon rains will continue in Rajasthan throughout the week, with several places witnessing heavy to very heavy precipitation.

Goa

An yellow alert was issued in North and South Goa districts till 7 July, predicting heavy rains across the coastal areas.

Mechanised fishing was banned in Goa till 31 July.

Water levels at 11 river monitoring stations across India have breached the warning level, but none have reached the danger threshold.

Assam's Kushiyara and the Brahmaputra rivers, Bihar's Kosi, Bagmati and Gandak rivers, Uttar Pradesh's Ganga, Ghagra aand Gandak rivers, Odisha's Subarnarekha and Tamil Nadu's Cauvery were in spate.

Reservoir and barrage inflows were forecasts for 23 sites across 10 states of the country after heavy rains.

Meanwhile, an orange alert was issued for Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Heavy rains were forecast in Kerala and Telangana. Isolated heavy rains were forecast in Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Sikkim and Bihar from 2 July to 7. *—PTI/AGENCIES*

Telangana CM A Revanth Reddy during an inspection at the site of explosion at the pharma plant, in Sangareddy, Telangana *PHOTO: PTI*

Blast a mishap: Pharma plant

HYDERABAD, 2 JULY

Sigachi Industries Ltd on Wednesday said the recent explosion and fire at its Pashamylaram plant in Telangana's Sangareddy district was an accident and not caused dur to negligence on its part.

The company announced an ex gratia payment of Rs 1 crore each to the families of the 40 staff members killed in the fire.

The official death toll stood at 38 on Wednesday afternoon.

The state government would provide Rs 1 crore compensation for the families of the deceased. Those seriously injured will receive Rs 10 lakh each, while those with minor injuries will be given Rs 5 lakh.

The company clarified that the accident was not caused by a reactor explosion. Plant operations will remain suspended for 90 days.

Sigachi's vice-chairman, Chidambarnathan Shanmuganathan said there was no negligence and the plant had been operating satisfactorily for the past 35 years.

Operating without no objection certificate from the Fire Department, the plant lacked adequate safety measures including fire alarms and heat sensors.

The police registered an FIR against the factory management.

Meanwhile, four workers from Odisha were killed and four others injured in the explosion at the factory. One among them was critical.

Two officers from Odhisa reached the explosion site to extend necessary support to those from the state.

The bodies of the deceased were sent to their native places through ambulances.

The removal of debris from the explosion site was almost over. *—PTI*

Lawyer defends Mishra citing 'love bites'

KOLKATA, 2 JULY

The lawyer of Monojit Mishra, the main accused in the Kolkata law student rape case, said the prosecution hid from the court that his client's body bore love bites apart from scratch marks.

Monojit Mishra *PHOTO: X*

Former Trinamool Congress student wing leader Monojit is among three persons arrested for allegedly raping the 24-year-old student inside the law college premises. They have been sent to police custody till 8 July.

"The prosecution has told you that scratch marks were found on the body of the prime accused. Have they ever shared with you that love bites were also found on the body of Monojit Mishra? If there is rape, there will never be any love bites on the body of the accused," advocate Raju Ganguly said.

Ganguly's claims followed a medico-legal examination that found scratch marks on the body of Monojit, pointing to signs of resistance by the rape survivor.

Ganguly alleged that there was a conspiracy to frame his client and that he was innocent.

"We have asked the prosecution whether the mobile phone of the victim was seized. If yes, then has it been sent to the forensic department? Have the police checked the call details of the victim? A lot of things in this case depend on these matters," he asked. *—AGENCIES*

Didi hard-pressed to punish guilty

KOLKATA, 2 JULY

As the outrage is raging over the rape and assault of a 24-year-old student at the South Kolkata Law College, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is battling a two-front war. The incident comes a month ahead of the first anniversary of the RG Kar rape and murder case that has generated a similar outrage last year.

Trinamool Congress chief hopes that unlike the RG Kar incident, swift and appropriate action by the police will help control the damage, but back-to-back remarks by senior leaders of the ruling party have left her in tight spot.

Besides, one of the four accused arrested in the case, Manojit Misra, is a former leader of the TMC's student wing Trinamool Chhatra Parishad. He has at least five previous cases pending against him, including for attempt to murder, sexual assault and extortion, prompting questions from the Opposition on why no police action was taken against him earlier. *—AGENCIES*

PATH OF DEVOTION

Excited first batch of pilgrims as they leave for the Amarnath Yatra 2025 in Jammu on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Phone tapping violates person's right to privacy: HC

CHENNAI, 2 JULY

The Madras High Court on Wednesday held that telephone tapping constitutes a violation of the right to privacy unless justified by a procedure established by law.

Justice N Anand Venkatesh also observed that the right to privacy is now an integral part of the right to life and personal libThe judge said section 5(2) of the Telegraph Act authorises interception of telephones on the occurrence of a public emergency or in the interests of public safety. Both these contingencies were not secretive conditions or situations.

Allowing a petition filed by P Kishore, managing director of Everonn Education Limited, the judge quashed an order of the union government, which authorised tapping of the mobile phone of the petitioner, in connection with a case relating to bribery and corruption, involving an assistant commissioner of income tax.

- The judge said the impugned order does not fall either within the rubric of "public emergency" or "public safety"

The judge said in the instant case, the impugned order does not fall either within the rubric of "public emergency" or "in the interests of public safety" as explained by the Supreme Court in the case of People's Union for Civil Liberties.

A a situation of this nature does not fall within the four corners of Section 5(2) of the Act as expounded by the Supreme Court in the case of People's Union for Civil Liberties, which has been approved by the Constitution Bench of the SC in K S Puttaswamy case, the judge added.

The authorities have also contravened Rule 419-A(17) of the Telegraph Rules by failing to place the intercepted material before the Review Committee within the stipulated time to ascertain whether the interception was made in compliance with Section 5(2) of the Act. The impugned order must be set aside. .*—PTI*

STRAINED RELATIONS

Shami's ex-wife, child get Rs 4 lakh alimony

KOLKATA, 2 JULY

The Calcutta High Court has directed Indian cricketer Mohammed Shami to pay a monthly maintenance of Rs 4 lakh to his estranged wife, Hasin Jahan, and their daughter during ongoing legal proceedings. The order, passed by Justice Ajoy Kumar Mukherjee, revised a previous sessions court decision that had set the amount at Rs 50,000 for Jahan and Rs 80,000 for the child.

Justice Mukherjee ruled that Rs 1.5 lakh for the wife and Rs 2.5 lakh for the daughter was fair and reasonable, considering Shami's financial status. He added that Shami would be at liberty to contribute further towards his daughter's education and other essential expenses.

Jahan filed an FIR against Shami and his family in 2018, alleging physical and mental abuse, dowry harassment, and neglect of their daughter.

The magistrate rejected Jahan's plea for Rs 10 lakh monthly relief, awarding only Rs 80,000 for the daughter.ThenJahan appealed again. *—PTI*

M'rashtra to amend laws to curb drug menace

MUMBAI, 2 JULY

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Wednesday said the state government will amend in the ongoing monsoon session of the state legislature the existing laws so that drug peddlers are booked under the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA).

On Wednesday, the opposition also staged a protest accusing the BJP-led government of favouring a private firm for the Thane-Borivali twin tunnel project, and alleged that it involved a Rs 3,000 crore scam. The tender process was cancelled by the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) in May after the L&T, which had been disqualified, later moved the Supreme Court. *—PTI*

Mumbai teacher rapes, drugs student for 1 year

MUMBAI, 2 JULY

PHOTO: X

A 40-year-old female teacher at a Mumbai school has been arrested for alleged sexual exploitation of a 16-year-old student for a year, often taking him to posh hotels and giving him anti-depressant pills and drugging him, police said on Wednesday.

The married woman, who was taken into custody last week, was so obsessed with the minor boy that she tried to contact him even after he passed out of school this year, police said.

According to police, the accused became attracted to her student during meetings in connection with the school's annual function in December 2023. She allegedly made her first sexual advance in January 2024.

Police said a friend of the accused, who is also named in the case, encouraged the then Class 10 boy to accept the illegal relationship, saying that affairs between older women and teenage boys were common.

The teacher would also often allegedly get the boy drunk before abusing him, police said.

She was booked under (POCSO) Act, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Juvenile Justice Act. *—PTI*

AFTER LAST YEAR'S VIOLENCE

KanwarYatra: Scrutiny of eateries begin

DEHRUDUN, 2 JULY

The Uttarakhand government has made it mandatory for eateries on the Kanwar Yatra route to prominently display their food licenses or registration certificates.

Owners of hotels, dhabas, food carts and stalls along the pilgrimage route will have to display a clean copy of their license or registration certificate prominently for the customers, health secretary and commissioner, Food Safety and Drug Administration, R Rajesh Kumar said.

Action will be taken against those violating the rules, with a fine of up to Rs 2 lakh imposed on them.

Special teams of food safety officers in Haridwar, Dehradun, Tehri, Pauri and Uttarkashi will collect samples of food and beverages from the pandals and send them for testing. Eataries not meeting the standards will be closed.

Varanasi Police Commissioner Mohit Agarwal interacts with people at a tea stall during an inspection ahead of the annual Kanwar Yatra in Varanasi *PHOTO: PTI*

Meanwhile, former MP and senior Samajwadi Party leader, ST Hasan condemned the actions of some Hindu organisations engaged in religious profiling of eateries along the Kanwar Yatra route, equating such acts with terrorism.

Local Hindu outfits in several cities allegedly checked the identities of eatery staff, targeting Muslims specifically.Viral videos showed volunteers coercing people to prove their religious identity.

Hasan called for immediate intervention by the Central and state governments to prevent such communal practices.

Police have summoned six activists associated with Swami Yashveer Maharaj for conducting unauthorised verification of the identities of eatery owners along the Kanwar Yatra route.

A viral video showed some individuals allegedly misbehaving with the staff of a dhaba located along the Kanwar Yatra route.

Swami Yashveer had launched a drive to check the background of owners of eateries, claiming it was necessary for the safety of pilgrims. *—PTI*

DREAM SPLASH

North Koreans flocked to the newly opened Wonsan-Kalma coastal resort on Wednesday, enjoying water slides and sea activities. The resort, which can host 20,000 guests, is central to Kim Jong Un's push to boost tourism and revive the struggling economy. Since 2022, North Korea has gradually eased Covid-19 border curbs. While international tourism remains limited, a small number of Russian tourists have been allowed in, with the first group set to visit Wonsan-Kalma on 7 July

PHOTO: PTI

Israel flayed for its double standards over nukes

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Israel has stockpiled up to 1,110kg of plutonium — enough to potentially produce 277 nuclear weapons — yet continues to label Iran, led by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, as a major threat to Middle East stability

PHOTO: AGENCIES

Israel says it is determined to destroy Iran's nuclear programme because its archenemy's furtive efforts to build an atomic weapon are a threat to its existence.

What's not-so-secret is that for decades Israel has been believed to be the Middle East's only nation with nuclear weapons, even though its leaders have refused to confirm or deny their existence.

Israel's ambiguity has enabled it to bolster its deterrence against Iran and other enemies, experts say, without triggering a regional nuclear arms race or inviting preemptive attacks.

Israel is one of just five countries that aren't party to a global nuclear nonproliferation treaty. That relieves it of international pressure to disarm, or even to allow inspectors to scrutinize its facilities.

Critics in Iran and elsewhere have accused Western countries of hypocrisy for keeping strict tabs on Iran's nuclear program — which its leaders insist is only for peaceful purposes — while effectively giving Israel's suspected arsenal a free pass.

A history of nuclear ambiguity

Israel opened its Negev Nuclear Research Center in the remote desert city of Dimona in 1958, under the country's first leader, Prime Minister David Ben Gurion. He believed the tiny fledgling country surrounded by hostile neighbors needed nuclear deterrence as an extra measure of security. Some historians say they were meant to be used only in case of emergency, as a last resort.

After it opened, Israel kept the work at Dimona hidden for a decade, telling United States' officials it was a textile factory, according to a 2022 article in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, an academic journal.

Relying on plutonium produced at Dimona, Israel has had the ability to fire nuclear warheads since the early 1970s, according to that article, co-authored by Hans M Kristensen, director of the Nuclear Information Project with the Federation of American Scientists, and Matt Korda, a researcher at the same organisation.

Israel's policy of ambiguity suffered a major setback in 1986, when Dimona's activities were exposed by a former technician at the site, Mordechai Vanunu. He provided photographs and descriptions of the reactor to The Sunday Times of London.

Vanunu served 18 years in prison for treason, and is not allowed to meet with foreigners or leave the country.

Israel possesses dozens of nuclear warheads, experts say

Experts estimate Israel has between 80 and 200 nuclear warheads, although they say the lower end of that range is more likely.

Israel also has stockpiled as much as 1,110kg of plutonium, potentially enough to make 277 nuclear weapons, according to the Nuclear Threat Initiative, a global security organization. It has six submarines believed to be capable of launching nuclear cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles believed to be capable of launching a nuclear warhead up to 6,500km, the organisation says.

Germany has supplied all of the submarines to Israel, which are docked in the northern city of Haifa, according to the article by Kristensen and Korda.

Nuclear weapons in the Middle East pose risks

In the Middle East, where conflicts abound, governments are often unstable, and regional alliances are often shifting, nuclear proliferation is particularly dangerous, said Or Rabinowitz, a scholar at Jerusalem's Hebrew University and a visiting associate professor at Stanford University.

"When nuclear armed states are at war, the world always takes notice because we don't like it when nuclear arsenals... are available for decision makers," she said.

Rabinowitz says Israel's military leaders could consider deploying a nuclear weapon if they found themselves facing an extreme threat, such as a weapon of mass destruction being used against them.

Three countries other than Israel have refused to sign the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: India, Pakistan and South Sudan. North Korea has withdrawn. Iran has signed the treaty, but it was censured earlier this month, shortly before Israel launched its operation, by the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog — a day before Israel attacked — for violating its obligations.

—PTI

LETTERS

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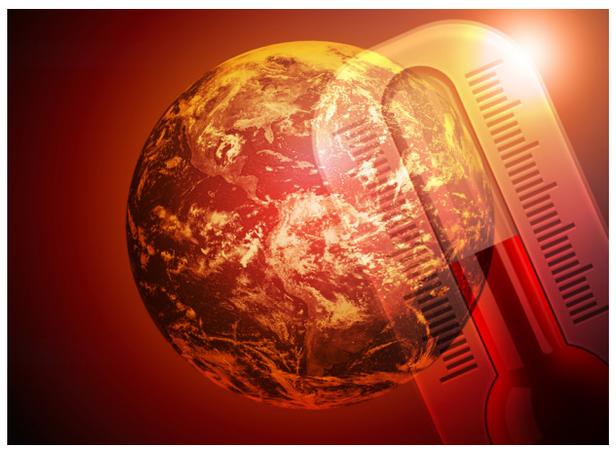
SALAR سالار

Asia warming twice as fast as global average: WMO



The report highlights that in 2024, heatwaves gripped a record area of the ocean, with sea surface temperatures hitting all-time highs.

Asia is currently warming at nearly twice the global average, driving extreme weather events and inflicting serious impacts on the region's economies, ecosystems, and societies, according to the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO).

In its "State of the Climate in Asia 2024" report released on Monday, the WMO said that the year 2024 was either the warmest or second warmest year on record–depending on the dataset used–with widespread and prolonged heatwaves affecting the region.

The warming trend between 1991 and 2024 was almost double of that observed during the 1961-1990 period.

The report highlights that in 2024, heatwaves gripped a record area of the ocean, with sea surface temperatures hitting all-time highs. The decadal warming rate of Asia's sea surface was nearly twice the global average.

Sea level rise on both the Pacific and Indian Ocean sides of the continent exceeded the global average, increasing the vulnerability of low-lying coastal areas. Meanwhile, glaciers across the High-Mountain Asia region–including parts of the Himalayas and Tian Shan–continued to shrink. Of the 24 glaciers monitored, 23 suffered mass loss during 2023-2024, intensifying hazards such as glacial lake outburst floods and landslides and posing long-term threats to regional water security.

The report paints a troubling picture of climate-related disasters across Asia. Extreme rainfall events caused widespread destruction and loss of life in many countries, while tropical cyclones left a trail of devastation. In parallel, prolonged droughts triggered severe economic and agricultural losses, further compounding the humanitarian toll of climate change.

"The State of the Climate in Asia report highlights the changes in key climate indicators such as surface temperature, glacier mass and sea level, which will have major repercussions for societies, economies and ecosystems in the region. Extreme weather is already exacting an unacceptably high toll," said WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo. "The work of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services and their partners is more important than ever to save lives and livelihoods," she added.

The report includes a case study from Nepal, demonstrating how improved early warning systems and anticipatory actions can help communities better prepare for and respond to climate variability and change. This, according to WMO, plays a key role in protecting lives and livelihoods in one of the world's most climate-vulnerable regions.

The report also states that the entire oceanic area of Asia under WMO Region II has experienced consistent surface ocean warming over the past decades, with particularly rapid increases in the northern Arabian Sea and western Pacific Ocean. Average sea surface temperatures have risen by 0.24°C per decade–double the global mean rate of 0.13°C. In 2024, most of Asia's ocean area was affected by marine heatwaves of strong, severe, or extreme intensity–the most extensive since records began in 1993. During August and September, nearly 15 million square kilometers of Asia's ocean, or roughly one-tenth of Earth's total ocean surface, experienced marine heatwaves. This is an area about the size of the Russian Federation and more than 1.5 times the size of China. The northern Indian Ocean and waters surrounding Japan, the Yellow Sea, and the East China Sea were especially impacted.

Sea-level rise in the Indian and Pacific Oceans bordering Asia outpaced global averages during the period from January 1993 to November 2024. In the Arctic, large parts of the ocean experienced significant sea ice melt, with the ice edge shifting far northward by the end of the season.

The High-Mountain Asia region, centred on the Tibetan Plateau and home to the largest volume of ice outside the polar regions, has continued to suffer. Glaciers across this region, covering an area of nearly 100,000 square kilometres, have been retreating steadily for several decades. During 2023-2024, reduced winter snowfall and extreme summer heat led to accelerated glacier mass loss, particularly in the central Himalayas and the Tian Shan range. Urumqi Glacier No.1, located in the eastern Tian Shan, recorded its most negative mass balance since observations began in 1959.

—ANI

The warming trend between 1991 and 2024 was almost double of that observed during the 1961-1990 period

PHOTO: PTI

World leaders adapt to 'Daddy' Trump's erratic diplomacy with flattery

If world leaders were teaching a course on how to deal with US President Donald Trump early in his second term, their lesson plan might go like this: Pile on the flattery. Don't chase the policy rabbits he sends running across the world stage. Wait out the threats to see what, specifically, he wants, and when possible, find a way to deliver it.

With every Oval Office meeting and summit, the leaders of other countries are settling on tactics and strategy in their pursuit of a working relationship with the emboldened American leader who presides over the world's largest economy and commands its most powerful military. The results were there to see at NATO, where leaders heaped praise on Trump, shortened meetings and removed contentious subjects from the agenda.

Given that Trump dominates geopolitics, foreign leaders are learning from each other's experiences dating to Trump's first term, when he reportedly threatened to withdraw the US from the alliance. Among the learnable Trumpisms: He disdains traditional diplomacy. With him, it's "America first," it's superlative — and "it's not even close." He goes with his gut, and the world goes along for the ride.

They're finding, for example, that the sheer pace of Trump's orders, threats and social posts can send him pinging from the priority of one moment to another. He describes himself as "flexible" in negotiations, such as those in which he threatened big tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China only to back down during talks. And while Trump claimed credit for the ceasefire in the Iran-Israel war, he also has yet to negotiate ending the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza as promised.

Trump's threat this week to levy retaliatory tariffs on Spain, for example, "is a mystery to everyone," Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever told reporters Thursday during a summit in Brussels. If the tariffs never happen, he said, "It won't be the first time that things don't turn out as bad as they seem at first glance. Or that he changes his mind. I'm not the kind of leader who jumps every time Trump says something."

Trump management 101: Discipline vs daddy diplomacy

Two summits this month, an ocean apart — the Group of Seven in Canada and NATO in The Netherlands — illustrate contrasting approaches to the American president on the brink of his sixth month back in office.

Meeting in mid-June in Alberta, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney welcomed Trump at a press conference by wishing him a happy birthday and adding a smidgen of flattery: "The G7 is nothing without US leadership and your personal leadership of the United States." But when Trump turned partisan, Carney cut off the event, saying: "We actually have to start the meeting."

US President Donald Trump describes himself as 'flexible' in negotiations

PHOTO: PTI

Trump appeared to nod in agreement. But later, on Monday, 16 June, he abruptly departed the summit a day early as the conflict between Israel and Iran intensified.

Trump ordered US pilots to drop 30,000-pound bombs early Sunday on two key underground uranium enrichment plants in Iran, and by Wednesday announced on social media "a Complete and Total ceasefire." What followed was a 48-hour whirlwind during which Trump veered from elated to indignant to triumphant as his fragile Israel-Iran ceasefire agreement came together, teetered toward collapse and ultimately coalesced.

Trump publicly harangued the Israelis and Iranians with a level of pique and profanity that was notable even for him. Chiding the two countries for attacking each other beyond a deadline, he dropped the f-word. Not finished, he then cast doubt on his support for NATO's mutual defence guarantee. Such was the president's mood as he winged toward a meeting of the trans-Atlantic alliance he had disparaged for years.

NATO was ready for Trump with a summit set to please him

NATO is essentially American, anyway. The Europeans and Canadians cannot function without American heavy lift, air refuelling, logistics and more. Most of all, they rely on the United States for its range of nuclear weapons for deterrence.

The 25 June summit was whittled down to a few hours, and one Trump-driven subject: Raising the amount of money the member nations spent on defence to lighten the load carried by the United States.

Emphatically not on the agenda: Russia's ongoing war with Ukraine. Trump did, however, meet with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who has climbed his own learning curve on Trump management since Trump berated him in the Oval Office in February. The Ukrainian leader has deployed a conciliatory approach and mirrored Trump's transactional style.

The goal, widely reported, was to avoid doing anything that might cause Trump to blow up the event or leave. Trump was invited to stay at the royal palace in The Hague and dine with the royal family. It was expected that most members would endorse the plan to raise their spending targets for their one-for-all defence against Russia.

The other NATO ambassadors had told Secretary-General Mark Rutte to deploy his Trump-whispering skills. He sent the president a private, pre-summit text predicting Trump would achieve "BIG" success there, which Trump posted on his own socials for all to see. At the summit, Rutte likened Trump's role quieting the Iran-Israel war to a "daddy" interdicting a schoolyard brawl.

"He likes me," Trump explained. Backlash was stiff. Lithuania's former foreign minister called Rutte's approach "the gushings of weakness and meekness."

—PTI

PHOTO: X

IMF grants Sri Lanka $350M bailout fund

COLOMBO, 2 JULY

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has completed the fourth review of Sri Lanka's USD 2.9 billion bail-out programme, allowing the country to draw a USD 350 million tranche from the four-year facility. Amid the island's unprece-dented economic crisis, the IMF in March 2023 approved a nearly USD 3 billion facility to assist Sri Lanka's "efforts to durably restore macro-economic stability by restoring fis-cal and debt sustainability. The facility helped Sri Lanka revive its bankrupt economy by building its re-serves and successfully negotiating debt restructuring with external creditors. "The Executive Board of the IMF completed the Fourth review under the 48-month Extended Fund Facility Arrangement, allow-ing the authorities to draw USD 350 million," the IMF said.

Belarus continues crackdown on dissent

TALLINN, 2 JULY

Authorities in Belarus continue their unrelenting crackdown on dissent even as they release some prisoners, the country's leading rights group told The Associated Press on Tuesday. Last month, the Bela-rusian government pardoned and released 14 prisoners, but at least 60 more people were arrested on politically motivated charges, said Pavel Sapelka, a rights advocate with the Viasna human rights centre. In May, the centre counted more than 100 politically driven arrests, Sapelka said. "The steam-roller of repressions doesn't stop, and the authorities continue to stifle any dissent in Belarus, opening new high-profile cases," Sapelka said. "No one, absolutely no one can feel safe in Belarus." *—PTI*

Snake on plane delays flight in Australia

MELBOURNE, 2 JULY

An Australian domestic flight was delayed for two hours on Tuesday after a stowaway snake was found in the plane's cargo hold, officials said on Wednesday. The snake was found as passengers were board-ing Virgin Australia Flight VA337 at Melbourne Airport bound for Brisbane, said snake catcher Mark Pel-ley. The snake turned out to be a harmless green tree snake. Pelly said he thought it could be venom-ous when he approached it in the darkened hold. "It wasn't until after I caught the snake that I realised that it wasn't venomous," Pelley said. Because the snake is native to the Brisbane region, Pelley sus-pects it came aboard inside a pas-senger's luggage and escaped during the flight from Brisbane to Mel-bourne. *—PTI*

Three dead as AU military aircraft crashes in Somalia

MOGADISHU, JULY 2

At least three people were killed on Wednesday when a small military aircraft serving the African Union peacekeeping mission in Somalia crashed at the international airport in Mogadishu. The aircraft crashed and caught fire while landing at the Aden Adde Airport in Somalia's capital, according to the Somali National News Agency. The agency said on the social platform X that the fire "has been con-tained, and authorities are assessing the situation." There were eight people in the aircraft according to reports but there has been no information on the remaining five people so far. The African Union peace-keeping mission is helping authorities in Somalia to fight the extremist rebels of al-Shabab. *—PTI*

HAMAS: WILL ACCEPT CEASEFIRE BUT WAR MUST END

Smoke from Israeli bombardment billows over the Gaza Strip, seen from southern Israel, on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Delegation to meet Egypt, Qatar mediators to discuss pact

CAIRO, 2 JULY

Hamas suggested Wednesday that it was open to a ceasefire agreement with Israel, but stopped short of accepting a US-backed proposal announced by US President Donald Trump hours earlier, insisting on its longstanding position that any deal bring an end to the war in Gaza.

Trump said Tuesday that Israel had agreed on terms for a 60-day ceasefire in Gaza and urged Hamas to accept the deal before conditions worsen. The US leader has been increasing pressure on the Israeli government and Hamas to broker a ceasefire, and hostage agreement and bring about an end to the war.

Trump said the 60-day period would be used to work toward ending the war — something Israel says it won't accept until Hamas is defeated. He said that a deal might come together as soon as next week.

But Hamas' response, which emphasised its demand that the war end, raised questions about whether the latest offer could materialise into an actual pause in fighting.

Hamas official Taher al-Nunu said that the militant group was "ready and serious regarding reaching an agreement." He said Hamas was "ready to accept any initiative that clearly leads to the complete end to the war."

A Hamas delegation is expected to meet with Egyptian and Qatari mediators in Cairo on Wednesday to discuss the proposal, according to an Egyptian official.

An Israeli official said that the latest proposal calls for a 60-day deal that would include a partial Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and a surge in humanitarian aid to the territory. The mediators and the US would provide assurances about talks on an end to the war, but Israel isn't committing to that as part of the latest proposal, the official said.

It wasn't clear how many hostages would be freed as part of the agreement, but previous proposals have called for the release of about 10.

Israel has yet to publicly comment on Trump's announcement. *—PTI*

A man carries a child wounded in an Israeli strike, after being administered first aid in the Shifa Hospital, Gaza City, on Monday *PHOTO: PTI*

I hope, for the good of the Middle East, that Hamas takes this Deal, because it will not get better – IT WILL ONLY GET WORSE

—Donald Trump, US President

Credit where credit is due. Donald Trump has successfully resolved several serious conflicts around the world

—Elon Musk, Tesla CEO

Iran suspends cooperation with IAEA

TEHRAN, 2 JULY

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian has approved a law to suspend cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Press TV reported.

Pezeshkian officially communicated the law mandating the government to suspend cooperation with the UN nuclear watchdog, which was approved during a public session of Iran's Parliament on 25 June.

As per the resolution, IAEA inspectors will not be allowed to enter Iran until the security of the coun-try's nuclear facilities is ensured and the peaceful nuclear activities are guaranteed, which is subject to the approval of Iran's Supreme National Security Council.

Furthermore, Iran is also contemplating imposing a ban on the entry of IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi, who has faced criticism for facilitating the actions of Israel and the US against Iran, according to Press TV. *—ANI*

US reduces aid to Ukraine after Pentagon review

WASHINGTON, 2 JULY

The US is halting some shipments of weapons to Ukraine amid concerns that its own stockpiles have declined too much, officials said on Tuesday.

The pause reflects a new set of priorities under President Donald Trump and came after Defence De-partment officials scrutinised current US stockpiles. The Biden administration had promised the munitions to Ukraine.

"This decision was made to put America's interests first following a review of our nation's military support and assistance to other countries across the globe," White House spokesperson Anna Kelly said. "The strength of the United States Armed Forces remains unquestioned -- just ask Iran."

The Defence Department did specify what weapons were being held back.

RUSSIA RAMPS UP OFFENSIVE

Russia ramped up military offensives on two fronts in Ukraine, scattering Kyiv's precious reserve troops and threatening to expand the fighting to a new Ukrainian region. Kremlin forces are steadily gaining ground in the strategic eastern logistics hub of Pokrovsk, the cap-ture of which would hand them a major battlefield victory and bring them closer to acquiring the entire Donetsk region. The fighting there has also brought combat to the border of the neighbouring Dnipropetrovsk region for the first time.

In the Sumy region, Ukrainian forces face a constant barrage of aerial glide bombs, drones and relent-less assaults by small groups of Russian infantrymen. *—PTI*

A residential building in the in Donetsk region of Ukraine on fire after it was hit by a Russian air strike on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

4 DEAD AS OIL-DRILLING SHIP SINKS IN RED SEA

CAIRO, 2 JULY

An oil-drilling ship capsized in the Gulf of Suez, killing at least four crewmen and leaving four others miss-ing, authorities said Wednesday.

The drilling ship overturned Tuesday evening off the city of Ras Ghareb, on the African side of the Gulf of Suez, the Red Sea's northwest-ern arm and a crucial ship-ping route, the Petroleum Ministry said in a statement.

There were 30 workers on board when the drilling ship capsized, said Amr Hanafy, governor of the Red Sea prov-ince.

Rescue teams recov-ered four bodies and rescued two 22 others who were taken to hos-pitals, he said.

It wasn't immediately clear what caused the drilling ship to capsize. Local media reported it was being tugged for excavations in another area when it over-turned. *—PTI*

B'DESH: HASINA SENTENCED TO SIX MONTHS IN CONTEMPT CASE

DHAKA, 2 JULY

Bangladesh's deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina was on Wednesday sentenced to six months in prison by the International Crimes Tribunal in a contempt of court case, according to media reports.

A three-member panel of the tribunal-1 (ICT), led by Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder, passed the order after reviewing a leaked phone conversation involv-ing the ousted Awami League leader that cir-culat-ed on social media last year, The Daily Star newspaper reported.

"According to the verdict, the sentence will come into effect from the day of her arrest or surrender before the court," chief prosecutor Mohammad Tajul Islam said after the verdict.

It marks the first time that 72-year-old Hasina has been sentenced in any case since she left office in August last year.

In the audio clip, the ousted premier is allegedly heard telling former Gobindaganj Upazila chairman and banned Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leader Shakil Akand Bulbul, "I have had 227 cases filed against me, so I have received a licence to kill 227 people."

The tribunal considered the statement contemptuous and a direct attempt to undermine the court.

The tribunal also convicted and sentenced Bulbul to two months' imprisonment, the state-run BSS news agency reported.

Hasina faces multiple cases in Bangladesh after being ousted on 5 August last year, which forced her to flee Dhaka. *—PTI*

- A three-member panel of the tribunal-1 led by Justice Md Golam Mortuza Mozumder, passed the order after reviewing a leaked phone conversation involving Hasina that circulated on social media last year

20 states sue US govt for health data leak

WASHINGTON, 2 JULY

The Trump administration violated federal privacy laws when it turned over Medicaid data on millions of enrolees to deportation officials last month, California Attorney General Rob Bonta alleged on Tuesday, saying he and 19 other states' attorneys general have sued over the move.

Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr's advisers ordered the release of a dataset that includes the pri-vate health information of people living in California, Illinois, Washington state, and Washington, DC, to the Department of Homeland Security last month.

All of those states allow non-US citizens to enrol in Medicaid programmes that pay for their expenses using only state taxpayer dollars.

The data included addresses, names, social security numbers, immigration status, and claims data for enrollees in those states. The data could be used to help the Department of Homeland Security locate migrants in its mass deportation campaign, experts said.

"This is about flouting seven decades of federal law policy and practice that have made it clear that personal healthcare data is confidential and can only be shared in certain narrow circumstances that benefit the public's health or the Medicaid program," Bonta said. *—PTI*

US President Donald Trump addresses the Congress in Capitol, in Washington, on Tuesday *PHOTO: ANI*

Paramount to pay $16M to Don over '60 Minutes' talk

Paramount has agreed to pay USD 16 million to settle a lawsuit filed by Trump over the editing of CBS' '60 Minutes' interview with then-vice president Kamala Harris in October. Paramount told media out-lets the money will go to Trump's future presidential library, not to the President himself. It said the settlement did not involve an apology. Trump's lawyer said the President had suffered "mental an-guish" over the editing of the interview by CBS News.

2 Chinese nationals charged with spying inside US

Two Chinese nationals have been charged with spying inside the US, including by taking photo-graphs of a naval base, coordinating a cash dead-drop and participating recruiting mem-bers of the military who they thought might be open to working for Chinese intelligence. "This case underscores the Chinese government's sustained and aggressive effort to infiltrate our mili-tary and undermine our national security from within," Attorney General Pam Bondi said.

FREAK OFF TRIAL

Diddy acquitted of trafficking, guilty of prostitution

NEW YORK, 2 JULY

Hip-hop mogul Sean "Diddy" Combs was acquitted on Wednesday of sex trafficking and racketeering charges but convicted of a prostitution-related offence, in a mixed verdict that could still see him jailed for up to 10 years. The case features salacious allegations that he coerced women into sexual encounters with other men sometimes referred to as "Freak Offs."

Casandra Ventura, the R&B singer known as Cassie who spent more than a decade with him, testified about drug-fueled sex sessions. Ventura testified that he directed all the encounters, which could last for days.

Diddy was also accused of rape and assault. The verdict came on the third day of jury deliberations. Combs, 55, was found guilty of violating the federal Mann Act by flying individuals, including girlfriends and paid male sex workers, across state lines for sexual encounters. He was cleared, however, of more serious charges alleging a sex-trafficking operation involving drug-fuelled coercion.

Sean ' Diddy' Combs *PHOTO: X*

A jury of eight men and four women rejected the prosecution's case that Combs used wealth and intimidation to manipulate women into participating in exploitative sex acts. His defence argued all participants were willing and the accusations overstated.

The partial verdict followed prolonged deliberations, with jurors reporting "unpersuadable opinions" on the racketeering conspiracy count. US District Judge Arun Subramanian adjourned the court while deciding whether to grant Combs bail. He has been held since his arrest in September.

Combs appeared solemn during proceedings, briefly showing gratitude to his lawyer. *—PTI*

Japan-China Boeing 737 drops 26,000 feet

TOKYO/SHANGHAI, 2 JULY

A Japan Airlines flight from Shanghai to Tokyo dropped nearly 26,000ft, forcing it to deploy oxygen masks. The plane made an emergency landing at Kansai Airport on Monday after it experienced a mid-air mechanical issue, South China Morning Post (SCMP) reported.

There were 191 passengers and crew onboard when it rapidly descended from approximately 36,000 feet to just under 10,500 feet within 10 minutes.

Passengers feared the plane would crash when the oxygen masks were released.

No injuries were reported when the aircraft landed in Osaka. Passengers were offered 15,000 yen in transportation compensation and provided one night of accommodation.

The Boeing 737 series has faced numerous safety incidents in the recent past. Last year, a Jeju Air Boeing 737-800 crashed while landing at Muan International Airport in South Korea, killing 179 people; only two crew members survived. In March 2022, all 132 aboard a China Eastern Airlines flight died when it crashed into a hill. *—Agencies*

PHOTO: X

Gold climbs ₹500 to ₹99,170 per 10g

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Gold prices jumped Rs 500 to Rs 99,170 per 10g in the national capital on Wednesday, tracking heavy global buying amid renewed concerns over US tariffs. According to the All India Sarafa Association, gold of 99.9 per cent purity had ended Rs 1,200 higher at Rs 98,670 per 10g on Tuesday. Gold has gained Rs 1,700 per 10g in the two consecutive sessions. Gold of 99.5 per cent purity climbed Rs 450 to Rs 98,600 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes). It had settled at Rs 98,150 per 10g on the previous trade. However, silver prices remained flat at Rs 1,04,800 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) on Wednesday. Spot gold in the global markets went up marginally to USD 3,342.44 per ounce. *—PTI*

Rupee falls 9P to close at 85.68 against USD

MUMBAI, 2 JULY

The rupee depreciated 9 paise to close at 85.68 (provisional) against US dollar on Wednesday, on weak domestic equity markets and a rise in crude oil prices. Forex traders said a slight recovery in the US dollar too weighed on the rupee as market players await the conclusion of India-US trade deal, which is at its final stage. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 85.59 against the greenback and touched an intraday high of 85.57 and a low of 85.75 against the greenback during the day. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.14 per cent to 96.95*—PTI*

Chhattisgarh lets govt staff invest in shares, MF

RAIPUR, 2 JULY

The Chhattisgarh government has allowed its employees to invest in shares, securities, debentures and mutual funds, an official here said. However, the prohibition on investment activities like intraday trading, BTST, Futures and Options and cryptocurrency will continue to remain in force, the public relations department official said. The state on June 30 issued a notification pertaining to amendments to the Chhattisgarh Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1965, under which, on the lines of provisions of Government of India, now government servants of the state are allowed to invest in shares, securities, debentures and mutual funds, he said. The amendment has been implemented by adding a new sub-section in Rule 19, which aims to ensure transparency in financial transactions, the official said.*—PTI*

Swiggy launches ₹99 meal store nationwide

BENGALURU, 2 JULY

Swiggy has launched a new in-app feature called the '99 Store', offering single-serve meals at a flat price of Rs 99 in over 175 cities across India. The initiative targets cost-conscious consumers, particularly the high-frequency Gen-Z demographic, providing affordable meal options without compromising on variety or quality. Available in cities such as Bengaluru, Delhi, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Pune, Chennai, Lucknow, Trivandrum and Patna, the store features a curated selection of quick-prep dishes across a wide range of cuisines. Options include biryani, noodles, rolls, South and North Indian meals, burgers, pizzas, and cakes. All dishes include free delivery under 'Eco Saver' mode, which helps keep costs down while maintaining reliable service. The 99 Store is integrated within the existing app. *—Agencies*

Ola, Uber, Rapido can now charge twice the base fare

Extra charges allowed for minimum 3km during peak hours

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

The relaxation is to compensate for 'dead mileage' – the distance travelled without a passenger *PHOTO: ANI*

The road transport ministry has allowed cab aggregators such as Uber, Ola and Rapido to charge up to two times the base fare during peak hours, as against 1.5 times earlier, while for non-peak hours the fare has to be a minimum of 50 per cent of the base fare.

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways in its "Motor Vehicles Aggregator Guidelines 2025" said "the aggregator shall be permitted to charge a minimum of 50 per cent lower than the base fare and a maximum dynamic pricing of two times the base fare specified under sub-clause (17.1)."

Moreover, the base fare chargeable shall be for a minimum of three kilometers to compensate for "dead mileage" -- including the distance travelled without a passenger and the distance travelled and fuel utilized for picking up the passenger(s).

As per the guidelines, the fare notified by the state government for the respective category or class of motor vehicles, shall be the base fare chargeable to passengers availing services from the aggregator.

States have been advised to adopt the revised guidelines within three months.

In case of cancellations, a penalty of 10 per cent of the fare not exceeding Rs 100, shall be imposed on the driver, if the cancellation is made without a reason identified as valid by the aggregator.

A similar penalty will be imposed on the passenger when such cancellation is made without a valid reason.

The guidelines said the Central government shall develop and designate a portal to enable for single-window clearance of application for licence as aggregator.

Aggregators have been mandated to ensure that drivers have health and term insurance of at least Rs 5 lakh and Rs 10 lakh respectively.

The new guidelines attempt to provide a light-touch regulatory system while attending to issues of safety and security of the user and the welfare of the driver. *—PTI*

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HDBFS stock surges 14%

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

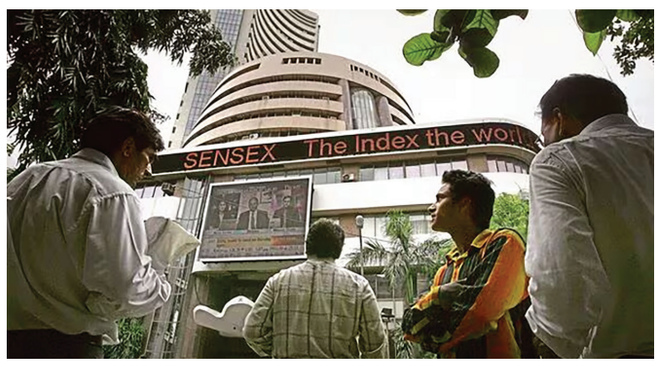
PHOTO: PTI

Shares of HDB Financial Services Ltd (HDBFS), a subsidiary of HDFC Bank, on Wednesday got listed with a premium of nearly 13 per cent against the issue price of Rs 740. It started trading at Rs 835, a jump of 12.83 per cent from the issue price on the BSE. Later, it surged 14.29 per cent to Rs 845.75.

At the NSE, shares of the firm listed at Rs 835. The company commanded a market valuation of Rs 69,658.72 crore during the initial trade. The Rs 12,500-crore initial share sale of HDB Financial Services got subscribed 16.69 times on the closing day of bidding on Friday last week, amid encouraging participation from institutional buyers.

The mega IPO had a price band of Rs 700-740 per share and was a combination of a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 2,500 crore and an offer-for-sale of Rs 10,000 crore by the promoter HDFC Bank.

Additionally, Travel Food Services, which operates quick-service restaurants and lounge business across airports in India and Malaysia, on Wednesday fixed a price band of Rs 1,045 to Rs 1,100 per share for its Rs 2,000-crore IPO. The initial share-sale will open on 7 July and conclude on 9 July. The allocation to anchor investors will take place on July 4, the company announced. *—PTI*



The 50-share NSE Nifty declined by 88.40 points or 0.35 per cent to settle at 25,453.40 *PHOTO: PTI*

Sensex tumbles 287pts as markets end lower

MUMBAI, 2 JULY

Benchmark BSE Sensex declined by 287 points on Wednesday due to profit selling in HDFC Bank, L&T and Reliance Industries shares and caution ahead of the impending US tariff deadline.

Paring its early gains, the BSE Sensex closed lower by 287.60 points or 0.34 per cent at 83,409.69. During the day, it dropped 546.52 points or 0.65 per cent to 83,150.77.

The 50-share NSE Nifty declined by 88.40 points or 0.35 per cent to settle at 25,453.40.

Flight of foreign capital from equities and a mixed trend in global equities impacted market sentiment, traders said.

Among Sensex pack, Bajaj Finserv, Larsen & Toubro, Bajaj Finance, HDFC Bank, Bharat Electronics and Kotak Mahindra Bank were the major laggards.

However, Tata Steel, Asian Paints, UltraTech Cement, and Trent were the biggest gainers.

The BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.20 per cent and midcap index dipped 0.18 per cent.

As many as 2,205 stocks declined while 1,809 advanced and 157 remained unchanged on the BSE.

India's manufacturing sector growth rose to a 14-month high of 58.4 in June, marked by improved trends in output and new orders, alongside a record upturn in employment, a monthly survey said on Tuesday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index – an indicator of sector performance - was 57.6 in May.

Gross GST collection increased by 6.2 per cent to over Rs 1.84 lakh crore in June but slipped below the Rs 2 lakh crore mark recorded in the previous two months. *—PTI*

SBI flags RCom account as 'fraud'

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

State Bank of India has decided to classify the loan account of beleaguered telecom firm Reliance Communications (RCom) as "fraud" and to report the name of its erstwhile director Anil Ambani to the RBI, said a regulatory filing.

The RCom in a regulatory filing said that it has received a letter dated 23 June, 2025 from the State Bank of India (SBI) to this effect.

According to the filing, Reliance Communications (RCom) and its subsidiaries received a total loan of Rs 31,580 crore from banks.

The Fraud Identification Committee of the bank has found deviation in utilization of the loans involving complex web of fund movements across multiple group entities.

The letter marked to Reliance Communications and its erstwhile director Anil Ambani stated that SBI has decided to report the loan account of the company as "fraud" and to report the name of Anil Ambani to the RBI, as per the extant RBI guidelines, the filing said.

RCom is at present going through a liquidation process.

The committee found that out of the total loan, Rs 13,667.73 crore, about 44 per cent, was utilized for the repayment of loans and other obligations. An amount of Rs 12,692.31 crore, 41 per cent of total loan, was utilized to pay connected parties.

According to the filing, Rs 6,265.85 crore was used for repaying other bank loans and Rs 5,501.56 crore was paid to related or connected parties which were not aligned with sanctioned purposes. *—PTI*

ECOR FREIGHT BIZ RISES 9.7%

BHUBANESWAR, 2 JULY

The East Coast Railway (ECoR) recorded a freight loading of 68.19 million tonnes between April and June 2025, reflecting a 9.69 per cent increase from 62.2 million tonnes during the same period last year, an official stated. In June alone, the zone loaded 23.15 million tonnes, up 7.72 per cent from 21.49 million tonnes in June 2024. The average daily freight loading now stands at 0.75 million tonnes, placing ECoR on course to meet its annual target for the 2025–26 financial year.

The sustained growth is attributed to strategic planning, improved operational efficiency. *—PTI*

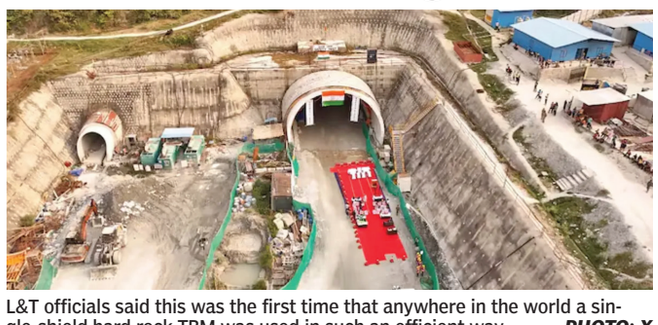
L&T sets rock tunnel boring record

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Construction firm Larsen and Toubro achieved a remarkable feat on the Rishikesh-Karnaprayag Rail Link project on 29 June, a day ahead of the baseline schedule, setting a new world record in tunnel construction using a single-shield hard rock tunnel boring machine (TBM).

"The TBM Team has broken the world record by achieving a maximum progress of 790m in a month using Single Scheid Hard Rock TBM named Shiv," said L&T's Whole Time Director SV Desai.

The company officials said this was the first time that anywhere in the world a single-shield hard rock TBM was used in such an efficient way.



L&T officials said this was the first time that anywhere in the world a single-shield hard rock TBM was used in such an efficient way *PHOTO: X*

"In the last leg of the boring work during May–June period for the longest rail tunnel of the country, the TBM named Shiv excavated 790m in 31 days and achieved a breakthrough," said Project Director Rakesh Arora.

This 13km tunnel is the downline one, running parallel at a 25m distance from the first one, a 14.5km upline tunnel, which achieved breakthrough on 16 April. These twin tunnels between Devprayag and Janasu make the country's longest transportation tunnels. *—PTI*

Paytm's profitability mirrors Zomato and PB Fintech: Oswal

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

PHOTO: X

Brokerage firm Motilal Oswal Financial Services (MOFS) has laid out a compelling case for Paytm's transformation into a sustainably profitable new-age tech company. The firm sees Paytm advancing steadily toward an inflexion point, driven by disciplined execution, a sharp focus on financial services, and robust growth in core business metrics, the MOFS said.

Paytm's profitability trajectory closely resembles that of other new-age tech firms such as Zomato and PB Fintech, the MOFS said.

As the latter companies transitioned to profitability, their stocks saw substantial re-rating – Zomato delivered 245 per cent returns and PB Fintech 156 per cent over the past two years. While Paytm has lagged in performance so far, the report suggests that with contribution margins projected to cross 55 per cent and adjusted EBITDA turning positive in FY26, the company may be on a similar upward path.

Paytm's ability to sustain growth in merchant acquisition, lending partnerships, and user engagement has set the foundation for long-term profitability. *—ANI*

RISHABH PANT NAMED AMBASSADOR FOR GOOD GAME'S SHOW

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Good Game Group Inc on Wednesday said it has roped in cricketer Rishabh Pant as global brand ambassador for its gaming reality show Good Game. The firm plans to invest up to Rs 100 crore a year to establish the show and has partnered with Spunnge Media Pvt Ltd for the India rollout, it said. "Rishabh's distinguished personality and natural talent resonate with people," founder Rai Cockfield said. *—PTI*

OpenAI launches customised services

MUMBAI, 2 JULY

American artificial intelligence (AI) organisation OpenAI has begun offering highly customised AI services starting at USD 10 million, says The Information. According to a report by the US tech-industry–focused publication, the initial clients include the U S Department of Defense and Southeast Asian app Grab, pitting the firm in direct competition with giants like Palantir and Accenture.

OpenAI is developing custom versions of its flagship GPT-4o model for its enterprise and government clients, with forward-deployed engineers (FDEs) embedded directly in organisations to adapt the technology to specific use cases. The FDEs integrate GPT-4o into proprietary systems and develop bespoke applications, including advanced chatbots and workflow automation tools. This model of AI consulting, which is different from the foundational model of development, highlights a significant expansion of OpenAI's business strategy. The pricing begins at USD 10 million and can climb into hundreds of millions.

The Information said Insiders OpenAI is aiming to deliver high value contracts exceeding USD 1 billion. *—Agencies*

2024 CYBER ATTACKS

Indian firms paid hackers ₹4cr to retrieve data

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

The findings are based on a survey of 378 Indian IT and cybersecurity firms, commissioned by UK-based cybersecurity firm Sophos and conducted during January–March 2025 *PHOTO: X*

UK-based cybersecurity firm Sophos on Wednesday claimed that 53 per cent of Indian companies that faced ransomware attacks in 2024 paid the hackers to get their data back.

According to the State of Ransomware in India 2025 report, the median payout towards ransom was USD 481,636 (about Rs 4 crore), down 79 per cent from the previous year.

The findings are based on a survey commissioned by Sophos and conducted during January-March 2025. As many as 378 Indian IT and cybersecurity firms affected by a ransomware attack were part of the study.

However, the survey did not name any companies which fell prey to cyberattacks and paid the ransom for recovery of data. "The median ransom demand fell by 52 per cent, from USD 2 million to USD 961,289, while the median payment dropped even more sharply by 79 per cent to USD 481,636," the report said.

Even though companies are paying less ransom, they spend a lot of money fixing the damage caused by these attacks. On average, Indian companies spend about USD 1.01 million on recovery costs, excluding the ransom money, the report said.

The most common technical causes of ransomware attacks were exploited vulnerabilities, compromised credentials, and malicious emails.

Operational challenges such as lack of skilled personnel, poor-quality protection, and insufficient cybersecurity products were cited by around 40 per cent of respondents as contributing factors to ransomware victimization. *—PTI*

HUAWEI TO FACE CRIMINAL CHARGES

BANGKOK, 2 JULY

A US federal judge has ruled that China's Huawei Technologies must face criminal charges in a wide-ranging case alleging theft of trade secrets, racketeering, and fraud. On Tuesday, District Judge Ann Donnelly dismissed Huawei's attempt to have the 16-count indictment thrown out, stating in her 52-page ruling that the company's arguments were premature.

The US Justice Department accuses Huawei and its subsidiaries of stealing American technology, violating sanctions by doing business in Iran and North Korea, and installing surveillance equipment used by Iran to monitor protesters during the 2009 anti-government demonstrations.

Huawei allegedly used a Hong Kong shell company, Skycom, to sell equipment to Iran, misleading HSBC about its business dealings. The company's chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou, was arrested in Canada in 2018 and released in 2021 as part of a prisoner swap with China. *—PTI*

Yarraji suffers injury in big blow to World C'ships hopes

Jyothi Yarraji

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Asian champion and national record holder 100m hurdler Jyothi Yarraji has suffered a knee injury while training a "few days back", in a big blow to her World Championships hopes later this year.

Yarraji, also an Asian Games silver medallist, has a high chance of qualifying for the World Championships in Tokyo in September. However, the recent injury could derail those ambitions.

"Due to an unfortunate injury to my knee during training a few days back, I've had to put a pause on my season," Yarraji, who holds the national record of 12.78 seconds, posted on her Instagram story.

"I'm working with my medical team to assess my options and make a decision on the way forward," said the 25-year-old who came back this season after suffering injury at the Paris Olympics last year.

Yarraji has yet to breach the direct qualification time of 12.73 seconds. Still, her 12.96-second effort while winning gold at the Asian Championships in May has put her among the 16 athletes who can make it to the World Championships through the world rankings. She is currently in the 12th spot among those who can make it to the World Championships through world ranking quota, but will need to maintain her spot by competing in events.

Athletes can qualify for the World Championships in two ways: direct entry by breaching the qualification mark or through world ranking quota. The qualification window is till 24 August.

Yarraji suffered a hip flexor injury during training in Finland after the 2024 Paris Olympics, impacting her training stint. At the start of the 2025 season, she tweaked her technique, switching from a seven-stride approach to her original eight-stride approach, which she believes will reduce injury risk.

"Injuries are part of an athlete's journey, and I'm viewing this as just another hurdle I'm going to overcome soon with all your support and blessings. She won gold in the 100m hurdles and 200m race in the Uttarakhand National Games in February, bagged the top spot in the 100m hurdles in the Federation Cup, before defending her Asian Championships title.

Her last title was in the Taiwan Athletics Open on 7 June. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Bumrah top-ranked Test bowler, Pant rises to 6th

DUBAI, 2 JULY

Swashbuckling India wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant continued his ascent in the ICC Test Rankings, moving up to sixth place in the latest list released on Wednesday. Pant, who became only the second wicketkeeper in Test history to score two centuries in the same match during the first Test against England last week, gained one spot to reach a new career-best rating of 801. He now trails top-ranked batter Joe Root by just 88 points. This marks a return to familiar territory for Pant, who had reached a career-high fifth spot during the same period in 2022. *—PTI*

Shastri slams Gambhir, Gill for resting Bumrah

This is an important game in the context of the series

Gill and Gambhir
PHOTO: PTI

BIRMINGHAM, 2 JULY

Former India head coach Ravi Shastri expressed disbelief at India's decision to rest a fully fit Jasprit Bumrah from the second Test against England, asserting that the pace spearhead should not have been given the option to sit out of a crucial game.

India, enduring a rough patch in Test cricket since October last year, has managed just one win in their last nine matches, marking their worst run in over a decade. Shubman Gill and his men lost the opening Test against England by five wickets in Leeds.

"If you look at the run, India has had, this becomes a very, very important test match. You've lost three against New Zealand, you've lost three against Australia," Shastri told 'Sky Sports'.

"You've lost the first Test match here, and you want to get back to winning ways. You have the best fast bowler in the world, and you make him sit out after seven days of rest, it's something very hard to believe," he said.Bumrah had claimed his 14th five-wicket haul in the first innings at Leeds.After the toss on Wednesday, Gill told former England batter Michael Atherton that Bumrah was rested to manage his workload.

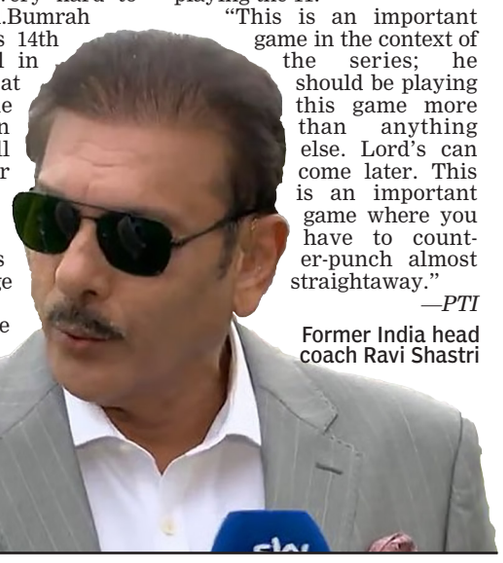
"Just to manage his workload. We did get a good break, and this is an important match for us. But the third Test being at Lord's, we think there'll be more in that pitch, so we'll use him there," Gill said.

Shastri, however, completely disagreed with the decision.

"This is a very important match, they've had a week off. I am a little surprised Bumrah is not playing this game," the cricketer-turned-commentator said.

"It should be taken out of the player's hand. It should be the captain and the head coach who decide who should be playing the 11.

"This is an important game in the context of the series; he should be playing this game more than anything else. Lord's can come later. This is an important game where you have to counter-punch almost straightaway." *—PTI*


Former India head coach Ravi Shastri

ANDERSON TENDULKAR TROPHY

Yahasvi Jaiswal misses out on a hundred

Yahasvi Jaiswal misses out on a hundred
A soft dismissal cost Yahasvi Jaiswal a well-deserved hundred against England here on Wednesday. Captain Shubman Gill is comfortable in the middle alongside his deputy Rishabh Pant on another good batting surface in the five-match series. England skipper Ben Stokes, who has a knack of picking up wickets out of nowhere, had Jaiswal (87 off 107) caught behind off a short and wide delivery. Jaiswal perhaps went too hard at the ball, only to offer a simple catch to Jamie Smith behind stumps.
With not much happening in the session, the English fans in the iconic Eric Hollies Stand sporadically made plenty of noise to push the home team.

Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappe, left, and Juventus' Daniele Rugani challenge for the ball during the Club World Cup round of 16 soccer matcha
PHOTO: X/@REALMADRID

Mbappe makes his debut in Real's win over Juventus

MIAMI GARDENS, 2 JULY

Kylian Mbappé jogged, clapped his hands together, and waved to a crowd of excited fans before checking into the Club World Cup for the first time.

From there, the Real Madrid star didn't need to do much for his club to advance past Juventus into the tournament's quarterfinals.

Gonzalo García, who had started Madrid's four matches while Mbappé dealt with an illness, scored what turned out to be the winning goal on a header Tuesday afternoon before subbing out of the match.

Mbappé replaced him in the 68th minute of the 1-0 win in the round of 16, interacting with the crowd that chanted his name before taking off his warm-up suit. He was active on the pitch and received a few passes from Vinicius Junior despite not scoring.

Mbappé had a gastrointestinal illness before Real Madrid's opening Club World Cup match and was treated at a hospital. He sat out all three group matches as Madrid won two and drew the other.

In his place, the 21-year-old García scored three goals, with a goal contribution in every match of the tournament. Real Madrid coach Xabi Alonso did not say whether Mbappé would start or come off the bench in the quarterfinals, which will be Saturday against either Borussia Dortmund or Monterrey at MetLife Stadium.

"I think that every single day he is getting better," Alonso said through an interpreter.

"I think from now until the quarterfinals, he's going to be even better.

I talk to him every single day and ask him how he is feeling, and I think he is going to be way better for the quarterfinals." *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Sexual assault allegations: Sammy calls for justice

ST GEORGE'S, 2 JULY

West Indies cricket has been rocked by allegations of sexual abuse against an unnamed current player, and the team's head coach Darren Sammy has called for justice to be served, but also stressed the need to follow the due process. A report published last week by Guyana-based Kaieteur News claimed that 11 women, including a teenager, have come forward with allegations of sexual offences against the cricketer, some reportedly dating back to 2023. No formal charges have been filed yet. Addressing the media ahead of the second Test against Australia, Sammy acknowledged the gravity of the situation while underscoring the importance of respecting legal procedures. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Lee Westwood qualifies for British Open

IRVINE, 2 JULY

Lee Westwood had rounds of 70-67 at Dundonald Links to earn his way into the British Open, his first major since the former world No. 1 joined Saudi-funded LIV Golf three years ago. Westwood was among 20 players who earned their places at Royal Portrush through Final Regional Qualifying, held over four courses in England and Scotland, each awarding five spots. He was among the three LIV players from the 15 who showed up for the qualifiers. Westwood, a 52-year-old from England with 25 titles on the European tour and three Order of Merit titles. *—PTI*

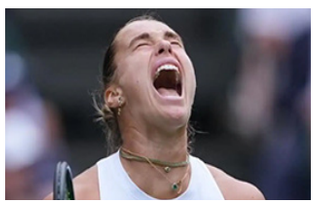
India's first visually-impaired Ironman Niket Srinivas dies

MUMBAI, 2 JULY

In a tragic incident that has emerged from Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, India has lost its first and the world's fifth differently-abled Ironman, Niket Srinivas Dalal. Niket was found dead on Tuesday morning due to a fall from the second floor of a hotel in the Samarthnagar area. The accident took place around 8 am. Niket Dalal was the son of former Deputy Mayor Lata Dalal. According to reports, a fire broke out at their home on the night of 30 June. As the house was deemed unsafe, his friends arranged for him to stay at a hotel around 2:30 am.

However, the next morning, Niket was found fallen in the hotel's parking area. The tragic incident has sent a wave of grief across the entire city.

A speech therapist by profession, Niket had created history in 2020 when he finished the Ironman Triathlon, becoming the first blind athlete to achieve the feat. The Ironman 70.3 Triathlon, which Dalal managed to finish in the fastest time, included a 1.9 km swim, 90 km bicycle ride, and 21.1 km run. Niket lost his eyesight in 2015 due to glaucoma. At that point, he was employed as a speech therapist in his hometown, Aurangabad. *—PTI*



SABALENKA REACHES THIRD ROUND

LONDON, 2 JULY

Aryna Sabalenka was given a tougher workout than she would have wanted before the top seed dismantled Czech Marie Bouzkova 7-6(4), 6-4 to reach the third round of Wimbledon on Wednesday.

As the sun played hide-and-seek with the grey clouds that hovered over Centre Court, Sabalenka kept knocking on the door in the opening set but was shut out by Bouzkova each time and dropped serve with a double fault in the 11th game.A frustrated Sabalenka let out a scream when she failed to convert a breakpoint in the following gamenext opportunity. "That was a tough moment in the match," Sabalenka said. *—PTI*

KPMG IRISH OPEN

Diksha eyes strong finish at Irish Open

KILDARE, 2 JULY

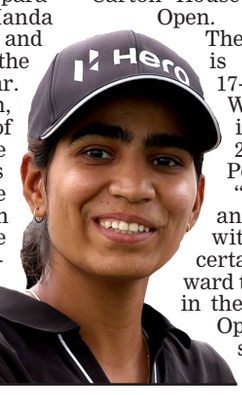
Indian golfer Diksha Dagar, currently ranked inside the Top 10 of the Ladies European Tour (LET), will aim for a strong performance at the KPMG Irish Open as she builds up to bigger challenges later this year.

Diksha sees this week's event as part of her preparation for the ISPS Handa Women's Scottish Open and the AIG Women's Open, the last of the Majors this year.

Both the Scottish Open, which carries a purse of USD two million, and the USD 9.5 million Women's Open are also part of the LPGA Schedule, which means a win in the Scottish will get the winner a card for the LPGA.

The other Indians in the field at the Irish Open this week include Avani Prashanth, Tvesa Malik, and Hitaashee Bakshi.

Two-time winner on the LET, Diksha, who narrowly missed out on getting into next week's Evian Championship, also a Major, is looking forward to getting used to conditions in the British Isles as she tees up Carton House for the Irish Open.



The Scottish Open is set for July 17-20, and the Women's Open is from July 24-27 at Porthcawl.

"I feel happy and comfortable with my game and certainly look forward to participating in the AIG Women's Open this year," said Diksha. *—PTI*

SUDHANSHU MITTAL RE-ELECTED AS KKFI CHIEF

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Sudhanshu Mittal was on Wednesday re-elected as president while Upkar Singh Virk became the new secretary of the Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI), at its governing body meeting here. The election was overseen by returning officer Kamini Lau, a retired district judge. Govind Sharma of the Maharashtra Kho Kho Association was elected as the treasurer of the new regime. Virk of Punjab Kho Kho Association served as the joint secretary in the last governing body, while Sharma was an executive member in the same. *—PTI*

Marquez quits as India football head coach

NEW DELHI, 2 JULY

Under-fire India football head coach Manolo Marquez stepped down on Wednesday after reaching a "mutual agreement" with the All Indian Football Federation (AIFF) following a string of poor performances by the national team. The AIFF Executive Committee, in its meeting here, agreed to relieve Marquez after he expressed his desire to do so despite one year still left in his contract. "The AIFF and Manolo decided to mutually part ways without any financial implications to any of the two parties. So, he is relieved from being India's coach. *—PTI*

WIMBLEDON 2025

Doctor's miracle pills helped me win: Djokovic

LONDON, 2 JULY

Novak Djokovic was visited twice by a doctor for a stomach issue and given what he called "miracle pills" during a 6-1, 6-7 (7), 6-2, 6-2 victory over Alexandre Muller in Wimbledon's first round.

Djokovic needed a break while trailing 2-1 in the third set at Centre Court and was seen again later in that set Tuesday night. "I went from feeling my best for a set and a half to my absolute worst for about 45 minutes," Djokovic said. "Whether it was a stomach bug, I don't know what it is, but I just struggled with that. The energy kind of kicked back after some doctor's miracle pills, and I managed to finish the match on a good note."

He improved to 20-0 in opening matches at the All England Club, where he has won seven of his 24 Grand Slam titles. He's been to the final at each of the last six editions, although he lost at that stage to Carlos Alcaraz in 2023 and 2024.

Gauff suffers shock first-round exit

Coco Gauff became just the third woman in the Open era to lose in the first round at Wimbledon right after winning the championship at the French Open, eliminated 7-6 (3), 6-1 by unseeded Dayana Yastremska of Ukraine on Tuesday night.

The No. 2-ranked Gauff made mistake after mistake at No. 1 Court, finishing with just six winners and a total of 29 unforced errors that included nine double-faults. She joined another highly seeded American, No. 3 Jessica Pegula, in bowing out on Day 2 of the tournament. *—PTI*

India knocks out Iraq, remains top of Group B

DUBAI, 2 JULY

India consolidated its position at the top of Group B in the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2026 Qualifiers with a commanding 5-0 win over Iraq on Wednesday at the 700th Anniversary Stadium in Chiang Mai.

Following the defeat, Iraq joins Mongolia and Timor-Leste as the teams eliminated from contention for a spot in the continental tournament from this group. Goals from Sangita Basfore, Manisha, Karthika Angamuthu, Nirmala , and Ratanbala Devi took the Blue Tigresses to nine points from three matches. India will face Thailand which plays Mongolia later in the day in its final qualifier, a match that will decide the group winner. *—PTI*